F. Hoffman

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A WINTER IN THE WEST:

LETTERS DESCRIPTIVE OF CHICAGO AND VICINITY IN 1833-4.

BY

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"WILD SCENES IN FOREST AND PRAIRIE;" "GRAYSLAER;" "THE LIFE OF JACOB LEISLER;" "THE VIGIL OF FAITH; AND OTHER POEMS;" "LOVE'S CALENDAR;" "THE ECHO; OR BORROWED NOTES FOR HOME CIRCULATION;" ETC.,

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the various compendiums of American literature. He possessed fine social qualities, conversational powers of a high order, taste, scholarship, and a chivalrous personal character which made him a favorite with all.

A new edition of his poems, edited by his nephew, Edward Fenno Hoffman, was published by Porter & Coates, Philadelphia, 1873.—*Appleton, etc.*

A WINTER IN THE WEST.*

NILES, BERRIEN CO., MICH., *Dec. 28, 1833.*

* * * * * *

MY journey through Michigan is now nearly finished, as it began, entirely alone. At White Pigeon, where I found quite a pretty village of four years' growth, I seemed, in getting upon the post-route from Detroit to Chicago, to get back once more to an old country. I found a good inn and attendance at Savary's, and discovered, by the travelers going north and south, that traveling was not as yet completely frozen up. There are a great many English emigrants settled upon this prairie, who, I am told, are successfully introducing here the use of live hedges instead of fences in farming. They are generally of a respectable class, and seem to be quite popular with the American settlers.

The morning was fine when I left White Pigeon to-day; and as the sun shot down through the tall woods, nothing could be more cheering than my ride among the beautiful hills of Cass County. The road, which is remarkably good, meanders through ravines for a distance of many miles, the conical hills resting upon the plain in such a manner as barely to leave a wheel-track between them, except when at times some pretty lake or broad meadow pushes its friths far within their embrace. A prairie of some extent was to be traversed on this side of these eminences, and the floating ice on the St. Joseph's was glistening beneath its shadowy banks in the rays of the cold winter moon when I reached its borders, and arrived at the stage-house in this flourishing town of Niles. Mine host, who does not seem to be the most accommodating person in the world, has refused to provide supper for myself and two other gentlemen at so late an hour, assigning as a reason, that "his women are not made of steel,"—an instance of cause and effect which I merely put upon record as being the only one of the kind I have met with in all Michigan. My

* A Winter in the Far West; by Charles Fenno Hoffman, of New York. 2 Volumes. London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street. 1835.

fellow-sufferers appear to be both agreeable men; and as we are to travel in company to Chicago, the sympathy arising from our present melancholy condition may ensure a pleasant intercourse under happier auspices.

The county of Cass, through which I have passed to-day, has a population of more than two thousand; and contains seven prairies, of six or eight miles in diameter, besides many smaller ones. They produce, when cultivated, from thirty to eighty bushels of new corn, or forty of wheat, to the acre. The mode of planting the former is to run a furrow, drop the corn in, and cover it with a succeeding furrow, which is planted in a similar way, and the field is rarely either plowed or hoed after planting. There are several pretty lakes in this county; but it is not so well watered as St. Joseph's, through which I passed yesterday; which, for local advantages of every kind, as well as fertility of soil, is generally considered one of the best in the peninsula. I like Kalamazoo County, however, as much as any part of Michigan I have seen. I am now within eight or ten miles of the Indiana boundary, and some twenty or thirty only from the shores of Lake Michigan, having described nearly a semicircle in my tour through the peninsula, including, with some deviations, the counties of Wayne, Monroe, Lenawee, and Washtenaw on the east, Jackson in the centre, and Calhoun, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph's, Cass, and Berrien on the west; and I have not met a resident in that whole range but what was pleased with the country, and, I may almost say, attached to its soil. The females, indeed, will sometimes murmur; and in some remote places I have heard those whose conversation indicated that they had not been brought up with the most ordinary advantages complain of "the want of society!" But even these would love to dilate upon the beauties of the country when the flowers were in bloom. Others, again, who had been more gently nurtured, would sigh at one moment for the comforts and elegancies of their maternal homes, while their eyes would kindle with enthusiasm the next, when speaking of the appearance which the woods around their new dwellings wore in summer. Small communities form but slowly in a country where the settlers, instead of gradually pushing their way together into the depths of the forest, as at the eastward, drive their wagons in any direction a hundred miles through the openings, and plant themselves down a day's journey apart, just where their fancy prompts them. This will account for my so often lighting upon a pleasant hamlet, after a day's travel through a perfect wilderness.

The River St. Joseph debouches into Lake Michigan in this

county; and as a steam-boat will probably run the next season from the town rapidly growing at its mouth to Chicago, a railroad from Detroit to this steam-boat harbor is only wanting to bring the visitor of Niagara within a few days' travel of Chicago, and carry him through the flowery groves of Michigan to one of the most important points in the Union, and what may be termed the central head of the Mississippi Valley. Delmonico may then stock his larder with grouse from the meadows of Michigan, and Gassin try his skill upon the delicious fish that swarm her lakes and rivers; (would that I could at this moment witness some of their curious orgies!) while sportsmen will think no more of a trip hither than they do now of an excursion to Islip, Rayner-South, or Patchogue. In the meantime, I have secured you the seeds of more than twenty varieties of wild flowers, which I shall send to their destination as soon as possible, lest, from the rapid increase of internal communication, they may lose half their value from ceasing to be a rarity.

DOOR PRAIRIE, INDIANA, *Dec. 29, 1833.*

BEING now on the mail-route between Detroit and Chicago, I am traveling very comfortably in a four-horse wagon, with the gentlemen mentioned in my last. I found my horse's back so chafed at White Pigeon, that it was unpleasant to use him longer under the saddle; and having met with my trunk at Niles, which was forwarded from Monroe by a friend, I am in a measure compelled to adopt what is certainly the most agreeable mode of traveling at this season through a bleak prairie country.

The cold winter moon was still riding high in the heavens as we ferried over the St. Joseph's at Niles this morning. A low-sided scow was the means of conveyance; and, after breaking the solid ice near the shore to loose us from our moorings, it required some pains to shun the detached cakes which came driving down the centre of the dark-rolling river; while, near the opposite shore, they had become so wedged and frozen together, that it required considerable exertion to break a way with our long poles, and make good our landing. At length, ascending the bank, a beautiful plain, with a clump of trees here and there upon its surface, opened to our view. The establishment of the Carey Mission,* a long, low, white building, could be distinguished afar off

* The Carey Mission-house, so designated in honor of the late Mr. Carey, the indefatigable apostle of India, is situated within about a mile of the river, and twenty-five miles (by land) above its mouth. The ground upon which it is erected is the site of an ancient and extensive Pottawatomie village, now no longer in existence. The establishment was instituted by the Baptist Mis-

faintly in the moonlight; while several winter† lodges of the Pot-

sionary Society in Washington, and is under the superintendence of the Rev. Mr. M'Coy; a man whom, from all the reports we heard of him, we should consider as very eminently qualified for the important trust committed to him. The plan adopted in the school proposes to unite a practical with an intellectual education. The boys are instructed in the English language, in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are made to attend to the usual occupations of a farm, and to perform every occupation connected with it—such as plowing, planting, harrowing, etc., in these pursuits they appear to take great delight. The system being well regulated, they find time for everything, not only for study and labor, but also for innocent recreation, in which they are encouraged to indulge. The females receive in the school the same instruction which is given to the boys; and are, in addition to this, taught spinning, weaving, and sewing (both plain and ornamental). They were just beginning to embroider—an occupation which may by some be considered as unsuitable to the situation which they are destined to hold in life, but which appears to us to be very judiciously used as a reward and stimulus: it encourages their taste and natural talent for imitation, which is very great; and, by teaching them that occupation may be connected with amusement, prevents their relapsing into indolence. They are likewise made to attend to the pursuits of the dairy; such as the milking of cows, churning of milk, etc. The establishment is intended to be opened for children from seven to fourteen years old; they very properly receive them at a much earlier age, and even—where a great desire of learning was manifested—older persons have been admitted. All appear to be very happy, and to make as rapid progress as white children of the same age would make. Their principal excellence rests in works of imitation; they write astonishingly well, and many display great natural talent for drawing. The institution receives the countenance of the most respectable among the Indians, who visit the establishment occasionally, appear pleased with it, and show their favor to it by presents of sugar, venison, etc., which they often make to the family of the missionary. The establishment, being sanctioned by the War Department, receives annually one thousand dollars from the United States, for the support of a teacher and blacksmith, according to the conditions of the treaty concluded at Chicago, in 1821, by Governor Cass and Mr. Sibley, commissioners on the part of the United States.

[The above interesting account of the Carey Mission is abridged from that given in the narrative of Long's expedition. The time that has elapsed since it originally appeared has of course diminished its present value; but the author not having had an opportunity of visiting the establishment, and finding from all the inquiries he could make regarding it, that the institution is sustaining itself efficiently upon the plan above detailed, he has thought that it would be more satisfactory to the reader to have this compendium of an official report than to dwell upon any hearsay information which he might have supplied in the text.]

† "They made their winter cabins in the following form: they cut logs about fifteen feet long, and laid these logs upon each other, and drove posts in the ground at each end, to keep them together; the posts they tied together at the top with bark; and by this means raised a wall fifteen feet long and about four feet high, and in the same manner they raised another wall opposite to this at about twelve feet distance: then they drove forks in the ground in the centre of each end, and laid a strong pole from end to end on these forks; and from these walls to the pole they set up poles instead of rafters, and on these they tied small poles in place of laths; and a cover was made of lynn-bark, which

tawatomies, three or four hundred of which tribe inhabit this fine district, were plainly perceptible over the plain. The moon, indeed, shone with an effulgence such as I have never witnessed, except beneath the pearly skies of the West. Morning came at last; still, but excessively cold; our horses' manes and our own clothes being covered with hoar-frost, while each blade of grass that shot its wilted spear above the snow glistened like a diamond's point beneath the uprising sun.

About ten o'clock, we reached a shanty on Terre Coupé prairie, and finding no one at home, we rummaged the establishment to find the materials for a breakfast, which we cooked ourselves, and left payment upon the table. Our next stage carried us over a *rolling prairie* to Laporte. The undulating surface resembled the ground-swell of the sea; and nothing could be more dreary at this season, when the bright sky of the morning became overcast, than moving mile after mile over this frozen lake—for such it appeared—with nothing but its monotonous swell to catch the eye wherever its glances roamed.

It was afternoon when we reached the little settlement of Laporte, which is situated on a pretty lake, in a prairie of the same name, the skirts of which are beautifully timbered. There was just light enough remaining when we reached our present stopping-place, a comfortable log-cabin, to see the opening ahead through the timber, from which this prairie takes its name. It forms a door opening upon an arm of the Grand Prairie, which runs through the States of Indiana and Illinois, and extends afterward, if I mistake not, to the base of the Rocky Mountains. I am now in the land of the *Hoosiers*, and find that long-haired race much more civilized than some of their western neighbors are willing to represent them. The term "Hoosier," like that of Yankee, or Buck-eye, first applied contemptuously, has now become a *soubriquet*, that bears nothing invidious with it to the ear of an Indianian. This part of the State is as yet but thinly settled; but the land is rapidly coming into market, and it is calculated to support a dense population. A new town and harbor, called Michigan City, about thirty miles off, on the shore of the

will run (peel) even in the winter season. At the end of these walls they set up split timber, so that they had timber all round, excepting a door at each end: at the top, in place of a chimney, they left an open place; and for bedding they laid down the aforesaid kind of bark, on which they spread bear-skins: from end to end of this hut, along the middle, there were fires, which the squaws made of dry split wood; and the holes or open places that appeared the squaws stopped with moss, which they collected from old logs; and at the door they hung a bear-skin; and, notwithstanding the winters are hard here, our lodging was much better than I expected."—*Col. Smith's Narrative.*

lake, is fast coming into notice, and giving a spur to the settlements in these parts. The country is, however, still wild enough, and I have a wilder yet to pass before reaching Chicago.

CHICAGO, *Jan. 1, 1834.*

We left the prairie on the east, after passing through "the door," and entering a forest, where the enormous black-walnut and sycamore trees cumbered the soil with trunks from which a comfortable dwelling might be excavated. The road was about as bad as could be imagined; and after riding so long over prairies as smooth as a turnpike, the stumps and fallen trees over which we were compelled to drive, with the deep mud-holes into which our horses continally plunged, were anything but agreeable. Still the stupendous vegetation of the forest interested me sufficiently to make the time, otherwise enlivened by good company, pass with sufficient fleetness, though we made hardly more than two miles an hour throughout the stage. At last, after passing several untenanted sugar-camps* of the Indians, we reached a cabin, prettily situated on the banks of a lively brook winding through the forest. A little Frenchman waited at the door to receive our horses, while a couple of half-intoxicated Indians followed us into the house, in the hope of getting *a'netos* (vulgarly, "a treat") from the newcomers. The usual settlers' dinner of fried bacon, venison cutlets, hot cakes, and wild honey, with some tolerable tea and Indian sugar,—as that made from the maple-tree is called at the West,—was soon placed before us; while our new driver, the frizzy little Frenchman already mentioned, harnessed a fresh team, and hurried us into the wagon as soon as possible. The poor little fellow had thirty miles to drive before dark, on the most difficult part of

* The ordinary appendages of a "sugar camp," and the process of making sugar, are described in the following extract from the work above quoted. "In this month we began to make sugar. As some of the elm-bark will strip at this season, the squaws, after finding a tree that would do, cut it down; and with a crooked stick, broad and sharp at the end, took the bark off the tree; and of this bark made vessels in a curious manner, that would hold about two gallons each: they made about one hundred of these kind of vessels. In the sugar-tree they cut a notch, and stuck in a tomahawk: in the place where they stuck the tomahawk they drove a long chip, in order to carry the water out from the tree, and under this they set their vessel to receive it; they also made bark-vessels for carrying the water, that would hold about four gallons each; they had two brass kettles that held about fifteen gallons each, and other smaller kettles, in which they boiled the water as fast as it was collected; they made vessels of bark that would hold about one hundred gallons each, for containing the water; and though the sugar-trees did not run every day, they had always a sufficient quantity of water to keep them boiling during the whole sugar-season."—*Col. Smith's Narrative.*

the route of the line between Detroit and Chicago. It was easy to see that he knew nothing of driving the moment he took his reins in hand; but when one of my fellow-travelers mentioned that little *Victor* had been preferred to his present situation of trust from the indefatigable manner in which, before the stage-route was established last season, he had for years carried the mail through this lonely country—swimming rivers and sleeping in the woods at all seasons—it was impossible to dash the mixture of boyish glee and official pomposity with which he entered upon his duties, by suggesting any improvement as to the mode of performing them. Away then we went, helter-skelter, through the woods—scrambled through a brook, and galloping over an arm of the prairie, struck again into the forest. A fine stream, called the Calaminc, made our progress here more gentle for a moment. But immediately on the other side of the river was an Indian trading-post, and our little French Phæton—who, to tell the truth, had been repressing his fire for the last half-hour, while winding among the decayed trees and broken branches of the forest—could contain no longer. He shook the reins on his wheel-horses, and cracked up his leaders with an air that would have distinguished him on the Third Avenue, and been envied at Cato's. He rises in his seat as he passes the trading-house; he sweeps by like a whirlwind: but a female peeps from the portal, and it is all over with poor Victor.

> "Ah, wherefore did he turn to look?
> That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
> Hath doomed—"

his discomfiture. The infuriate car strikes a stump, and the unlucky youth shoots off at a tangent, as if he were discharged from a mortar. The whole operation was completed with such velocity that the first intimation I had of what was going forward, was on finding myself two or three yards from the shattered wagon, with a tall Indian in a wolf-skin cap standing over me. My two fellow-passengers were dislodged from their seats with the same want of ceremony; but though the *disjecta membra* of our company were thus prodigally scattered about, none of us providentially received injury. Poor Victor was terribly crest-fallen; and had he not unpacked his soul by calling upon all the saints in the calendar, in a manner more familiar than respectful, I verily believe that his tight little person would have exploded like a torpedo. A very respectable-looking Indian female, the wife, probably, of the French gentleman who owned the post, came out, and civilly furnished us with basins and towels to clean our hands and faces,

which were sorely bespattered with mud; while the gray old Indian before-mentioned assisted in collecting our scattered baggage.

The spot where our disaster occurred was a sequestered, wild-looking place. The trading establishment consisted of six or eight log-cabins, of a most primitive construction, all of them gray with age, and so grouped on the bank of the river as to present an appearance quite picturesque. There was not much time, however, to be spent in observing its beauties. The sun was low, and we had twenty-five miles yet to travel that night before reaching the only shanty on the lake shore. My companions were compelled to mount two of the stage-horses, while I once more put the saddle on mine; and leaving our trunks to follow a week hence, we slung our saddle-bags across the cruppers and pushed directly ahead.

A few miles' easy riding through the woods brought us to a dangerous morass, where we were compelled to dismount and drive our horses across, one of the party going in advance to catch them on the other side. A mile or two of pine barrens now lay between us and the shore, and winding rapidly among the short hills covered with this stinted growth, we came suddenly upon a mound of white sand at least fifty feet high. Another of these desolate-looking eminences, still higher, lay beyond. We topped it; and there, far away before us, lay the broad bosom of Lake Michigan,—the red disk of the sun just sinking beneath it, and the freshening night-breeze beginning to curl its limpid waters on the shore; and now, having gained their verge, whichever way we turned there was nothing discernible but the blackening lake on one side and these conical hills of shifting white sand on the other. Some of them, as the night advanced, and objects were only discernible by the bright starlight, assumed a most fantastic appearance, and made me regret that I could not visit the "Sleeping Bear," and other singularly-formed mounds, which, many miles farther to the north, swell from two to three hundred feet above the level of the Lake. The deep sand, into which our horses sunk to the fetlocks, was at first most wearisome to the poor brutes; and having twenty miles yet to travel entirely on the lake-shore, we were compelled, in spite of the danger of quicksands, to move as near the water as possible. But though the day had been mild, the night rapidly became so cold that, before we had proceeded thus many miles, the beach twenty yards from the surf was nearly as hard as stone, and the finest macadamized road in the world could not compare with the one over which we now galloped. Nor did we want lamps to guide us on our way. Above, the stars stood out like points of lights; while the resplen-

dent fires of the Aurora Borealis, shooting along the heavens on our right, were mocked by the livid glare of the Kankakee marshes, burning behind the sand-hills on our left. The Lake alone looked dark and lowering; though even its gathering waves would smile when touched with light as they broke upon the shore. The intense cold seemed to invigorate our horses; and dashing the fire from the occasional pebbles, they clattered along the frozen beach at a rate that brought us rapidly to our destination for the night.

It was a rude cabin, built of stems of the scrub pine, standing behind a sandy swell about two hundred yards from the shore. My fingers were numb with cold; and seeing a rough-looking fellow moving from the door toward the horses of my companions, I requested him to take mine also; but, upon his politely rejoining that "he was nobody's servant but his own," I could only wish him "a more civil master," and proceeded to take care of the animal myself. A brake of stunted evergreens near-by supplied the place of a stable; and passing a wisp of dry grass over the reeking limbs of my four-footed friend, I flung my cloak over his back and tethered him for the night. The keeper of the rustic hostelrie came up just as I had got through with this necessary task, and explaining to me that the insolent lounger was a discharged mail-carrier, returned with me to the house for a measure of corn; while I, guided by the light flickering through the crevices of his frail dwelling, rejoined my companions, nestled with two other half-frozen travelers around the grateful fire within. The strangers were both western men; one, I believe, a farmer, for some time settled in Illinois, and the other an Indian trader of long standing in Chicago. Warlike incidents in border story, and the pacific dealings between the whites and Indians, formed the chief subjects of conversation, which soon became general, and was prolonged to a late hour; finally the late treaty held at Chicago—at which, as you have probably seen in the newspapers, several thousand Indians were present—was discussed, and the anecdotes that were told of meanness, rapacity, and highway robbery (in cheating, stealing, and forcibly taking away) from the Indians, exasperated me so that I expressed my indignation and disgust in unmeasured terms. The worthy trader, who was a middle-aged man, of affable, quiet, good manners, seemed to sympathize with me throughout; but the whole current of my feelings was totally changed when, upon my observing shortly afterward to another gentlemen, that "I should have liked to have been at Chicago a year ago," my warm coadjutor ejaculated from under the bedclothes, where he had in the meantime bestowed

himself, "Ah, sir, if you had, the way in which you'd have hooked an Indian blanket by this time would be curious." The chivalric knight of La Mancha himself could not have sustained heroics under such a home-thrust, but must have burst into the hearty laugh in which I was joined by all present. The hour of sleep for all at last arrived, and a couple of wooden bunks, swung from the roof, falling to the lot of those who had come in first, I wrapped myself in a buffalo-skin, and placing my saddle under my head for a pillow, soon "slept like a king;" a term which, if

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown"

be true doctrine, is, probably, *quasi lucus*, etc.

Our transient acquaintances parted from us in a most friendly manner in the morning; and after waiting in vain till near noon to see if by any chance little Victor might not be able to forward our trunks to this point, we mounted once more, and pushed ahead with all speed, to accomplish the remaining twenty or thirty miles between the shanty and Chicago. Our route was still along the shore; and after passing round the end of the Lake and taking a northwardly direction, the way in which the icy blast would come down the bleak shore of the Lake "was a caution." We galloped at full speed, every man choosing his own route along the beach, our horses' hoofs ringing the while as if it were a pavement of flint beneath them. The rough ice piled up on the coast prevented us from watering our beasts; and we did not draw a rein till the rushing current of the Calaminc, which debouches into Lake Michigan some ten miles from Chicago, stayed our course. A cabin on the bank gave us a moment's opportunity to warm, and then, being ferried over the wintry stream, we started with fresh vigor, and crossing about a mile of prairie in the neighborhood of Chicago, reached here in time for an early dinner. Our horses this morning seemed none the worse for this furious riding; their escape from ill consequences being readily attributable to the excellence of the road, and the extreme coldness of the weather while traveling it. For my own part, I never felt better than after this violent burst of exercise.

We had not been here an hour before an invitation to a public ball was courteously sent to us by the managers;* and though my

* During the winter of 1833–4, Chicago, for the first time, was enabled to present a scene of social intercourse and gayety. A large emigration had rushed in from all parts of the country. Chiefly young people, full of vivacity and enthusiasm, mostly strangers to each other. Naturally they sought to cultivate acquaintance and by social intercourse to lay the foundation for what

soiled and travel-worn riding-dress was not exactly the thing to present one's self in before ladies of an evening, yet, in my earnestness to see life on the frontier, I easily allowed all objections to be overruled by my companions, and we accordingly drove to the house in which the ball was given. It was a frame-building, one of the few as yet to be found in Chicago; which, although

might be called society. Frequent gatherings at private houses, where dancing, plays, and charades constituted their amusements, and familiarized them with each other. But beyond this, a number of what might be called public balls were given, to which everybody of respectability were invited. Among the first of these was the one so graphically described in the text. The company could not be called select, in the strict sense of the term, but it was every way respectable. The female population was considerably less than the male, so it was necessary to secure the presence of all to equalize the sexes as far as possible, and to secure respectable numbers. If the servant-girls were invited and danced in the same sets with their mistresses, it must be remembered that those servant-girls were well-educated daughters of respectable families who had lately arrived, with more energy and intelligence than wealth, and who were willing to work at high wages to secure the means for a start in the new place. Indeed, there was no place for drones or luxurious idlers in Chicago then, and industry and frugality were alone respectable. Those girls who were not ashamed to wait upon the table then were destined soon to become the wives and mothers of whom Chicago has ever had cause to be proud. Then were laid the foundations of Chicago society, and the result has shown they were well laid.

A printing-press had lately been established here by John Calhoun, so that ball-tickets could then be printed. We copy one of these tickets issued for a ball, given at the same hall as the one attended by Mr. Hoffman, and a few weeks later, to show how such things were done nearly fifty years ago, and in the very infancy of society in Chicago:

"GRAND WA-BA-NO.

Misses H. and L. HARMON are respectfully solicited at Mr. Graves' Assembly Room,* on Wednesday, February 5th, at 6 o'clock P. M.

R. A. KINZIE,	Man'grs.	I. D. HARMON,
G. SPRING,		E. K. SMITH,
J. D. CATON,		M. B. BEAUBIEN.

Chicago, February 1, 1834."

[* In the rear part of what is now Nos. 82, 84, 86, and 88 Lake Street.]

It may be interesting to notice that three of the managers whose names

one of the most ancient French trading-posts on the Lakes, can only date its growth as a village since the Indian war, eighteen months since.* When I add that the population has *quintupled*

appear upon this ball-ticket are still living after the lapse of forty-eight years, *viz.:* Caton, Harmon, and Beaubien. We may note, too, that at that time it was considered quite the thing to borrow a word from the Pottawatomies, who still had their home here, which signifies a social dance as distinguished from a war-dance.

The month of January had been very cold, and early in February the thaw came and made the streets, or rather the low wet prairie, almost impassable; so that the company had to be taken to the ball in lumber-wagons, or ox-carts, or other similar heavy conveyance. Indeed, there were but few carriages in the town and they could not be used when the mud was deep. For several years after this, in place of carriages, one-horse carts were used by the ladies in making calls, or in attending church, parties, or weddings, and when all did it, it was considered quite the proper thing to do. In truth, in deep mud, it was the most comfortable conveyance that could have been invented. A cart half-filled with prairie-hay, covered with a buffalo-robe, and others for covering, which could be backed up to the door—sidewalks, except a single plank, were then unknown in Chicago—out of which the passengers could step into the house, and was the most comfortable and convenient thing imaginable. As late as 1837 or 1838, and probably later, ladies did their shopping in these horse-carts, and thus met each other wading through the mud with a merry salutation, or at the stores and shops, in front of which their carts were ranged, with a jolly, happy greeting, far more joyous than later, when they could go in their landaus at any season of the year.—JOHN DEAN CATON, Chicago, March 20th, 1882.

* The town of Chicago has become so important a place, and is so rapidly developing its resources, as to call for a more particular notice than it receives in the text. Its sudden strides to prosperity can be best estimated, however, by first perceiving the condition and prospects of Chicago as they presented themselves to Major Long's party when they visited it ten years since. "The village presents no cheering prospect, as, notwithstanding its antiquity, it consists of but few huts, inhabited by a miserable race of men, scarcely equal to the Indians, from whom they are descended. Their log or bark-houses are low, filthy, and disgusting, displaying not the least trace of comfort. Chicago is, perhaps, one of the oldest settlements in the Indian country. A fort is said to have formerly existed there: mention is made of the place as having been visited in 1671 by Perot, who found 'Chicagou' to be the residence of a powerful chief of the Miamis. The number of trails centering all at this spot, and their apparent antiquity, indicate that this was probably for a long while the site of a large Indian village. As a place of business, it offers no inducement to the settler; for the whole annual amount of the trade on the Lake did not exceed the cargo of five or six schooners, even at the time when the garrison received its supplies from Mackinac."—*Long's Second Expedition*, vol. i. p. 164.

Contrast this desolate picture—not with the representation made in the text,

last summer, and that but few mechanics have come in with the prodigious increase of residents, you can readily imagine that the influx of strangers far exceeds the means of accommodation; while scarcely a house in the place, however comfortable-looking outside, contains more than two or three finished rooms. In the present instance, we were ushered into a tolerably-sized dancing room, occupying the second story of the house, and having its unfinished walls so ingeniously covered with pine branches and flags borrowed from the garrison, that, with the whitewashed ceiling above, it presented a very complete and quite pretty appearance. It was not so warm, however, that the fires of cheerful hickory, which roared at either end, could have been readily dispensed with. An orchestra of unplaned boards was raised against the wall in the centre of the room; the band consisted of a dandy negro with his violin, a fine military-looking bass drummer from the Fort, and a volunteer citizen, who alternately played an accompaniment upon the flute and triangle. Blackee, who flourished about with a great many airs and graces, was decidedly the king of the company; and it was amusing, while his head followed the direction of his fiddle-bow with pertinacious fidelity, to see the Captain Manual-like precision with which the soldier dressed to the front on one side, and the nonchalant air of importance which the cit attempted to preserve on the other.

As for the company, it was such a complete medley of all ranks, ages, professions, trades, and occupations, brought together from all parts of the world, and now for the first time brought together, that it was amazing to witness the decorum with which they commingled on this festive occasion. The managers (among whom were some officers of the garrison) must certainly be *au fait* at

but—with the existing condition of the place, with the alterations that have taken place since the writer left there, not yet a year ago. He is informed by a gentleman, recently from Illinois, that Chicago, which but eighteen months since contained but two or three frame-buildings and a few miserable huts, has now five hundred houses, four hundred of which have been erected this year, and two thousand two hundred inhabitants. A year ago, there was not a place of public worship in the town; there are now five churches and two school-houses, and numerous brick stores and warehouses. The shipping-lists of daily arrivals and departures show how soon the enterprise and activity of our citizens have discovered and improved the capabilities of that port. There have been three hundred arrivals this year, and more than 50,000 dollars worth of salt has been sold there this season, and of European and domestic merchandise to the amount of 400,000 dollars. A line of four steam-boats, of the largest class of lake-boats, and regular lines of brigs and schooners, are now established between that port and the principal ports of the lower lakes.

It is gratifying to hear of such improvement in the western country, and to have predictions so recently made of the growth and prosperity of this point in particular, thus far more than fulfilled.

dressing a lobster and mixing regent's punch, in order to have produced a harmonious compound from such a collection of contrarieties. The gayest figure that was ever called by quadrille-playing Benoit never afforded me half the amusement that did these Chicago cotillons. Here you might see a veteran officer in full uniform balancing to a tradesman's daughter still in her short frock and trousers, while there the golden aiguillette of a handsome surgeon* flapped in unison with the glass beads upon a scrawny neck of fifty. In one quarter, the high-placed buttons of a linsey-woolsey coat would be *dos à dos* to the elegantly turned shoulders of a delicate-looking Southern girl; and in another, a pair of Cinderella-like slippers would *chassez* cross with a brace of thick-soled broghans, in making which, one of the lost feet of the Colossus of Rhodes may have served for a last. Those raven locks, dressed *à la Madonne*, over eyes of jet, and touching a cheek where blood of a deeper hue mingles with the less glowing current from European veins, tell of a lineage drawn from the original owners of the soil; while these golden tresses, floating way from eyes of heaven's own color over a neck of alabaster, recall the Gothic ancestry of some of "England's born." How piquantly do these trim and beaded *leggins* peep from under that simple dress of black, as its tall nut-brown wearer moves, as if unconsciously, through the graceful mazes of the dance. How divertingly do those inflated gigots, rising like windsails from that little Dutch-built hull, jar against those tall plumes which impend over them like a commodore's pennant on the same vessel.

But what boots all these incongruities, when a spirit of festive good-humor animated every one present? "It takes all kinds of people to make a world," (as I hear it judiciously observed this side the mountains); and why should not all these kinds of people be represented as well in a ballroom as in a legislature? At all events, if I wished to give an intelligent foreigner a favorable opinion of the manners and deportment of my countrymen in the aggregate, I should not wish a better opportunity, after explaining to him the materials of which it was composed, and the mode in which they were brought together from every section of the Union, than was afforded by this very ball. "This is a scene of enchantment to me, sir," observed an officer to me, recently exchanged to this post, and formerly stationed here. "There were but a few traders around the Fort when I last visited Chicago; and now I can't contrive where the devil all these well-dressed people have come from!" I referred him to an old resident of three months

* Dr. Philip Maxwell, born at Guilford, Winham Co., Vt., April 3, 1799; app'd Ass't-Surg. U.S.A., 1832; arr'd at Chicago, Mar. 15, 1833; died Nov. 5, 1859.

standing, to whom I had just been introduced, but he could throw no light upon the subject; and we left the matter of peopling Chicago in the same place where philosophers have put the question of the original peopling of the continent. I made several new acquaintances at this new-year's ball, and particularly with the officers of the garrison, from whose society I promise myself much pleasure during my stay.

The geographical position of Chicago is so important, that I must give you a more minute description of the place in my next. Would that in folding this I could enclose you half the warm wishes for your welfare which the season awakens in my bosom!

CHICAGO, ILL., *Jan. 10, 1834.*

I HAVE been here more than ten days, without fulfilling the promise given in my last. It has been so cold, indeed, as almost to render writing impracticable in a place so comfortless. The houses were built with such rapidity, during the summer, as to be mere shells; and the thermometer having ranged as low as 28 below zero during several days, it has been almost impossible, notwithstanding the large fires kept up by an attentive landlord, to prevent the ink from freezing while using it, and one's fingers become so numb in a very few moments when thus exercised, that, after vainly trying to write in gloves, I have thrown by my pen, and joined the group, composed of all the household, around the bar-room fire. This room, which is an old log-cabin aside of the main house, is one of the most comfortable places in town, and is, of course, much frequented; business being, so far as one can judge from the concourse that throng it, nearly at a standstill. Several persons have been severely frost-bitten in passing from door to door; and not to mention the quantity of poultry and pigs that have been frozen, an ox, I am told, has perished from cold in the streets at noonday. An occasional Indian,*

* The Indians that frequent the neighborhood of Chicago (pronounced *Tshicawgo*), though not so numerous, are composed of the same mixture of different tribes which Major Long noticed ten years since. They are chiefly Pottawatomies and Ottawas, with a few Chippewas (ò-chè-pe-wàg), and a straggling Kickapoo or Miami; and a great admixture of the different languages (or rather dialects, for they are radically the same,) of the three first prevails there. Among them are many who have borne arms against the Americans; and some who doubtless took a part in the massacre at the fall of the place in 1812. The particulars of that bloody affair are yet mentioned with horror by the old settlers. They may be briefly summed up as follows:

It was soon after* the infamous surrender of Gen. Hull at Detroit, when, in pursuance of the terms entered into with the enemy by that officer, who was commandant-in-chief upon the North-west frontier, Capt. Heald, the commandant at Chicago, prepared to surrender† his post to the British. The Pot-

* The day before, Aug. 15, 1812.

† Evacuate.

wrapped in his blanket, and dodging about from store to store after a dram of whiskey; or a muffled-up Frenchman, driving furiously in his cariole on the river, are almost the only human beings abroad; while the wolves, driven in by the deep snows which preceded this severe weather, troop through the town after nightfall, and may be heard howling continually in the midst of it.

The situation of Chicago, on the edge of the Grand Prairie, with the whole expanse of Lake Michigan before it, gives the freezing winds from the Rocky Mountains prodigious effect, and renders a degree of temperature, which in sheltered situations is but little felt, almost painful here.

> "The bleak winds
> Do sorely ruffle; for many a mile about,
> There's scarce a bush."

The town lies upon a dead level, along the banks of a narrow forked river, and is spread over a wide extent of surface to the shores of the Lake, while vessels of considerable draught of water can, by means of the river, unload in the centre of the place. I believe I have already mentioned that four-fifths of the population have come in since last spring; the erection of new buildings during the summer has been in the same proportion; and although

tawatomies and other hostile Indians in the vicinity were on the watch for the movement; and on the morning when the garrison evacuated the place, they had so completely succeeded in duping Capt. Wells, the credulous and unfortunate Indian agent, that the fatal march of the 15th October,* 1812, was precipitated by his advice. The Americans were about seventy in number, with several women and children; and they were escorted from the shelter of the Fort by a band of about thirty Miamis. The road led along the beach of the Lake, with those short sand-hills, spoken of in a previous letter, extending along the route between the Lake and the open prairie. Behind these the British Indians lay concealed; and when the Americans had proceeded about a mile from the Fort, the wily enemy sprang from his lair, and poured down a murderous fire from the beach. Capt. Heald immediately brought his men to a charge, and drove the Indians from the nearest sand-hill; but their numbers were so great that they formed instantly again upon his flank. His party was surrounded; and while the Miamis in a manner withdrew their protection, and helped to swell the number of his opponents, the little force of Captain Heald was completely cut off from the women and children, who were cowering beneath the baggage on the lake-shore. The Americans fought with desperation: but such a handful of men was soon cut to pieces; and scarcely a man survived to witness the atrocities that were practised upon the helpless creatures upon the beach. There were four officers killed upon the spot; Capt. Heald and his wife were both badly wounded; and twelve children† were butchered on the shore, or shared the fate of their mothers, who ran shrieking over the prairie. The unhappy Indian agent, who was among the slain, is said to have had his breast cut open, and his heart roasted and eaten by the savage foe.

* August 15th, 1812. † Captain Heald's Letter, dated Pittsburg, October 23, 1812.

a place of such mushroom growth can, of course, boast of but little solid improvement in the way of building, yet contracts have been made for the ensuing season which must soon give Chicago much of that metropolitan appearance it is destined so promptly to assume. As a place of business, its situation at the central head of the Mississippi Valley will make it the New Orleans of the North; and its easy and close intercourse with the most flourishing Eastern cities will give it the advantage, as its capital increases, of all their improvements in the mode of living.

There is one improvement to be made, however, in this section of the country, which will greatly influence the permanent value of property in Chicago. I allude to a canal from the head of Lake Michigan to the head of the steam navigation on the Illinois, the route of which has been long since surveyed. The distance to be overcome is something like ninety miles; and when you remember that the head-waters of the Illinois rise within eleven miles of Chicago River,* and that a level plain of not more than eight feet elevation above the latter is the only intervening obstacle, you can conceive how easy it would be to drain Lake Michigan into the Mississippi by this route; boats of eigh-

* "The Chicago River, is about two [one] hundred and fifty feet wide, has sufficient depth of water for lake-vessels to where it forks in the centre of the town. The southern and principal branch takes its rise about six miles from the Fort, in a swamp, which communicates also with Desplaines, one of the head branches of the Illinois. This swamp, which is designated by the Canadian voyageurs as Le Petit Lac, is navigable at certain seasons of the year: it has been frequently traveled by traders in their pirogues; and a bateau from St. Louis, loaded with provisions for the garrison at Chicago, has through this medium passed from the Mississippi into Lake Michigan. Major Long observes, upon passing through this marsh in a canoe, "We were delighted at beholding for the first time a feature so interesting in itself, but which we had afterward an opportunity of observing frequently on the route; *viz.:* the division of waters starting from the same source and running in two different directions, so as to become the feeders of streams that discharge themselves into the ocean at immense distances apart. * * * When we consider the facts above stated, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that an elevation of the Lakes a few feet (not exceeding ten or twelve) above their present level would cause them to discharge their waters, partly at least, into the Gulf of Mexico. That such a discharge has at one time existed, every one conversant with the nature of the country must admit; and it is equally apparent that an expenditure trifling in comparison to the importance of the object would again render Lake Michigan a tributary of the Mexican Gulf."

"In July, 1833, Giles Spring and myself went in a large canoe from Chicago to Riverside, passing through Mud-Lake. At the dividing part of the waters we paused, and diverted ourselves by sending the water either into the Gulf of Mexico or the Gulf of St. Lawrence by a single motion of the paddle.—JOHN DEAN CATON, Chicago, April 7, 1882.

teen tons have actually passed over the intervening prairie at high water. Lake Michigan, which is several feet above Lake Erie, would afford such a never-failing body of water, that it would keep steam-boats afloat on the route in the dryest season. St. Louis would then be brought comparatively near to New York; while two-thirds of the Mississippi Valley would be supplied by this route immediately from the markets of the latter. This canal is the only remaining link wanting to complete the most stupendous chain of inland communication in the world. I had a long conversation this morning on the subject with Major H.,* the

* Henry S. Handy, born about 1804, and educated at Pontiac, N. Y.

Practised law and edited a newspaper at Salem, *Indiana Annotator*, for three years, about 1827. He was afterward, for a time, in the Pension Office at Washington. Came to Chicago June 17, 1833, as Assistant-Superintendent of Chicago Harbor; appointed by President Jackson.

Died at Byfield, Mich., in 1846.

CHICAGO, ILL., *April 7th, 1882.*

Dear Sir:—Complying with request contained in your note of the 23d ult., I have made investigation in relation to the "Major H." referred to in "Hoffman's Winter in the West, 1834," and am satisfied that through some mistake, probably in copying from the original manuscript, the letter "**H**" has been substituted for "**A.**"

In 1834, the construction of the pier was in charge of Lieut. JAMES ALLEN, 1st-Dragoons, U. S. Army, serving on Engineer duty at this place from January 10, 1834, to October 15, 1836. A synopsis of his military record, taken from "Cullom's Register of the Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy," is as follows:

JAMES ALLEN. *Graduate No. 575. Class Rank, 35.*

Born in Ohio. Appointed from Indiana.

Military History: Cadet at the U. S. Military Academy from July 1, 1825, to July 1, 1829, when he was graduated and promoted in the Army to Bvt.-2d-Lieut., 5th Infantry, July 1, 1829. 2d-Lieut., 5th Infantry, July 1, 1829. Served on frontier duty at Fort Brady, Mich., 1829–33, and Fort Dearborn, Ill., (2d-Lieut., 1st-Dragoons, March 4, 1833,) 1833–34. On Engineer duty, Jan. 10, 1834, to Oct. 15, 1836. On Frontier duty, (1st-Lieut., 1st-Dragoons, May 31, 1835,) at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., 1837. On Engineer duty, April 10, 1837, to Dec. 28 (Captain, 1st-Dragoons, June 30, 1837), 1838. On Frontier duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., 1839 and '40. Pottawatomie country, 1840. Fort Leavenworth, Kan., 1840–42. Fort Gibson, I. T., 1842. March to Fort Atkinson, Io., 1842. Fort Sanford, Io., 1842. Raccoon Fork, Io., 1843. Fort DesMoines, Io., 1843–44. Raccoon Fork, Io., 1844. Fort DesMoines, Io., 1844–45. Expedition to Lac qui parle, 1845. Fort DesMoines, Io., 1845–46; and in the War with Mexico, 1846, as Lieut.-

United States' engineer, who is engaged in superintending the construction of a pier at this place.* He was polite enough to sketch the main features of the route with his pencil, in such a manner as to make its feasibility very apparent. The canal would pass for the whole distance through a prairie country, where every production of the field and the garden can be raised with scarcely any toil, and where the most prolific soil in the world requires no other preparation for planting than passing the plough over its

Colonel, commanding Mormon Battalion of Missouri Volunteers, on the march to New Mexico, July 16 to August 23, 1846.

Died, August 23, 1846, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Aged 40.

In addition to the above, it may be of interest to note in this connection that while on duty at Fort Brady, Mich. (Sault Ste. Marie), in 1832, being then a lieutenant of the 5th Infantry, he accompanied Schoolcraft on an expedition to, and beyond, the sources of the Mississippi River, and on his return, submitted a very interesting report and map of the expedition, which were printed in Ex. Doc. No. 323; H. R., 1st Sess., 23d Congress.

Referring to his death at Fort Leavenworth, while in command of the Mormon Battalion *en route* to Mexico, Capt. T. J. Lee, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy, in the Class of 1830, speaks of it as "A great loss to the Service."

Respectfully yours,

G. J. LYDECKER, Major of Engineers, U. S. A.

* CHICAGO HARBOR.—The following figures, giving the amounts appropriated in the years named by Congress for the Improvement of the Harbor at this Port, will prove interesting. The work done by the Government includes the straightening at the mouth of the river, and the building of the outer harbor south of the piers, and the work already done under Maj. G. J. Lydecker's supervision north of the entrance to the river. When the completion and placing in position of the cribs for the outer breakwater north of the lighthouse, a safe harbor of refuge will be afforded for all the vessels that arrive at the port. The following are the appropriations and the years in which they were made:

1833	$25,000	1870	100,000
1834	32,801	1871	100,000
1835	32,800	1872	90,000
1836	32,000	1873	90,000
1837	40,000	1874	75,000
1838	30,000	1875	78,000
1843	25,000	1876	5,000
1844	30,000	1878	75,000
1852	20,000	1879	75,000
1866	88,704	1880	145,000
1868	35,000	1881	150,000
1869	29,700	Total,	$1,404,005

—*Daily Chicago Tribune*, March 30, 1882.

bosom. The most effectual mode of making this canal would be to give the lands along its banks to an incorporated company, who should construct the work within a certain time. The matter is now merely agitated at elections as a political handle.

January 13.

I have got thus far in a letter to you, when several officers of the garrison, to whom I am indebted for much hospitable attention and many agreeable hours, stopped opposite the door with a train of carioles, in one of which I was offered a seat, to witness a pacing-match on the ice. There were several ladies with gentlemen in attendance already on the river, all muffled up, after the Canadian fashion, in fur robes, whose gay trimmings presented a rich as well as most comfortable appearance. The horses, from which the most sport was expected, were a black pony bred in the country, and a tall roan nag from the lower Mississippi. They paced at the rate of a mile in something less than three minutes. I rode behind the winning horse one heat, and the velocity with which he made our cariole fly over the smooth ice was almost startling. The Southern horse won the race; but I was told that in nine cases out of ten, the nags from his part of the country could not stand against a French pony.

In the middle of the chase, a wolf, probably roused by the sleigh-bells from his lair on the river's bank, trotted along the prairie above, within gunshot, calmly surveying the sport. The uninvited presence of this long-haired amateur at once suggested a hunt for the morrow, and arrangements were accordingly made, by the several gentlemen present, for that most exciting of sports, a wolf-chase on horseback.

It was a fine bracing morning, with the sun shining cheerily through the still cold atmosphere far over the snow-covered prairie, when the party assembled in front of my lodgings, to the number of ten horsemen, all well mounted and eager for the sport. The hunt was divided into two squads; one of which was to follow the windings of the river on the ice, and the other to make a circuit on the prairie. A pack of dogs, consisting of a greyhound or two for running the game, with several of a heavier and fiercer breed for pulling it down, accompanied each party. I was attached to that which took the river; and it was a beautiful sight, as our friends trotted off in the prairie, to see their different colored capotes and gayly equipped horses contrasted with the bright carpet of spotless white over which they rode, while the sound of their voices was soon lost to our ears, as we descended to the channel of the river, and their lessening figures were hid

from our view by the low brush which in some places skirted its banks. The brisk trot in which we now broke, brought us rapidly to the place of meeting; where, to the disappointment of each party, it was found that neither had started any game. We now spread ourselves into a broad line, about gunshot apart from each other, and began thus advancing into the prairie. We had not swept it thus more than a mile, when a shout on the extreme left, with the accelerated pace of the two furthermost riders in that direction, told that they had roused a wolf. "The devil take the hindermost," was now the motto of the company, and each one spurred for the spot with all eagerness. Unhappily, however, the land along the bank of the river, on the right, was so broken by ravines, choked up with snow, that it was impossible for us, who were half-a-mile from the game when started, to come up at all with the two or three horsemen who led the pursuit. Our horses sunk to their cruppers in the deep snow-drift. Some were repeatedly thrown; and one or two, breaking their saddle-girths, from the desperate struggles their horses made in the snow-banks, were compelled to abandon the chase entirely. My stout roan carried me bravely through all; but when I emerged from the last ravine on the open plain, the two horsemen who led the chase, from some inequality in the surface of the prairie, were not visible; while the third, a fleet rider, whose tall figure and Indian head-dress had hitherto guided me, had been just unhorsed, and, abandoning the game afoot, was now wheeling off apparently with some other object in view. Following on the same course, we soon encountered a couple of officers in a train, who were just coming from a mission of charity in visiting the half-starved orphans of a poor woman,* who was frozen to death on the prairie, a day or two since—the wolves having already picked her bones before her fate became known. One by one, our whole party collected around to make inquiries about the poor children.

It was now about eleven o'clock; we were only twelve miles from Chicago; and though we had kept up a pretty round pace, considering the depth of the snow, in coursing backward and forward since eight, our horses generally were yet in good condition, and we scattered once more over the prairie, with the hope of rousing more game.

* "Mrs. Smith, wife of a Mr. Smith residing at Blue Island, who left this place 2d of January (which was the coldest day we have experienced this winter) for her home, and when within a mile and a half of her dwelling, she sank benumbed and exhausted to rise no more. When found, she was dreadfully mangled and torn to pieces by the wolves. She has left a husband and five children to mourn her untimely end."—*Chicago Democrat*, Jan. 28, 1834.

Not ten minutes elaped before a wolf, breaking from the dead weeds which, shooting eight or ten feet above the level of the snow, indicated the banks of a deep ravine, dashed off into the prairie, pursued by a horseman on the right. He made instantly for the deep banks of the river, one of whose windings was within a few hundred yards. He had a bold rider behind him, however, in the gentleman who led the chase (a young educated half-blood, of prepossessing manners, and well connected at Chicago*). The precipitous bank of the stream did not retard this hunter for a moment; but, dashing down to the bed of the river, he was hard upon the wolf before he could ascend the elevation on the opposite side. Four of us only reached the open prairie beyond in time to take part in the chase. Nothing could be more beautiful. There was not an obstacle to oppose us in the open plain; and all our dogs having long since given out, nothing remained but to drive the wolf to death on horseback. Away, then, we went, shouting on his track; the hotly-pursued beast gaining on us whenever the crust of a deep snow-drift gave him an advantage over the horse, and we in our turn nearly riding over him when we came to ground comparatively bare. The sagacious animal became at last aware that his course would soon be up at this rate, and turning rapidly in his tracks as we were scattered over the prairie, he passed through our line, and made at once again for the river. He was cut off and turned in a moment by a horseman on the left, who happened to be a little behind the rest; and now came the keenest part of the sport. The wolf would double every moment upon his tracks, while each horseman in succession would make

* Madore Benjamin Beaubien was born at Grand River, Mich., July 15, 1809, and is the second and oldest living son of the late Gen. Jean Baptiste Beaubien, whose grandfather was a Frenchman, and Mah-naw-bun-no-quah, his first wife, a Pottawatomie woman. His early days were spent in Chicago and vicinity. When about fourteen, he was sent to school at Carey Mission, near Niles, Mich., then in charge of Rev. Isaac McCoy, where he was prepared for and sent to Hamilton College, Madison Co., N.Y., being there four years—his elder brother, Charles H., who died about 1858, was educated at Princeton College, N.J.—he was a member of the first Board of Trustees of the Town of Chicago; was a merchant and did business on the S.-W. cor. of South Water and Dearborn Streets, and his old-time partner was our well-known citizen, Dr. Valentine A. Boyer, whose sister was Mr. Beaubien's first wife. He left Chicago for his Western home, in the fall of 1840, with his Pottawatomie friends, whose business agent he has been, as well as the Mayor of the city near where they now reside, Silver Lake, Shawnee Co., Kansas.—Geo. H. Fergus, Chicago, April 12, 1882.

a dash at and turn him in a different direction. Twice I was near enough to strike him with a horsewhip, and once he was under my horse's feet; while so furiously did each rider push at him, that as we brushed by each other and confronted horse to horse, while riding from different quarters at full speed, it required one somewhat used "to turn and wind a fiery Pegasus" to maintain his seat at all. The rascal, who would now and then look over his shoulder and gnash his teeth, seemed at last as if he was about to succumb; when, after running a few hundred yards in an oblique direction from the river, he suddenly veered his course, at a moment when every one thought his strength was spent, and gaining the bank before he could be turned, he disappeared in an instant. The rider nearest to his heels became entangled in the low boughs of a tree which grew near the spot; while I, who followed next, was thrown out sufficiently to give the wolf time to get out of view by my horse bolting as he reached the sudden edge of the river. The rest of the hunt were consequently at fault when they came up to us; and after trying in vain to track our lost quarry over the smooth ice for half an hour, we were most vexatiously compelled to abandon the pursuit as fruitless, and proceed to join the other squad of our party, who could now be seen at some distance, apparently making for the same point to which our route was leading. A thicket on the bank soon hid them from our view; and we then moved more leisurely along in order to breathe our horses. But suddenly the distant cry of hounds gave intimation that new game was a-foot; and, on topping a slight elevation, we discerned a party of horsemen far away, with three wolves running apparently about a pistol-shot ahead of them. Our squad was dispersed in an instant. Some struck off at once in the prairie, in a direct line for their object, and were soon brought to in the deep snow-banks; others, taking a more circuitous course, proceeded to double the ravines that were filled with the treacherous drift; and some, more fortunate, took to the frozen river, where the clatter of their hoofs on the hard ice seemed to inspirit their horses anew. I chanced to be one of the latter, and was moreover the first to catch sight again of one of the animals we were pursuing, and find myself nearer to him than any of our party. The wolf was of the large gray kind. But one of the hunters had been able to keep up with him; and him I could distinguish far off in the prairie, turning and winding his foaming horse as the wolf would double every moment upon his tracks, while half-a-dozen dogs, embarrassed in the deep snow, were slowly coming up. I reached the spot just as the wolf first stood at bay. His bristling back, glaring eyes, and ferociously

distended jaws might have appalled the dogs for a moment; when an impetuous greyhound, who had been for some time pushing through the snow-drifts with unabated industry, having now attained a comparatively clear spot of ground, leaped with such force against the flank of the wolf as to upset him in an instant, while the greyhound shot far ahead of the quarry. He recovered himself instantly, but not before a fierce, powerful hound, whose thick neck and broad muzzle indicated a cross of the bull-dog blood with that of a nobler strain, had struck him first upon the haunch, and was now trying to grapple him by the throat. Down again he went, rolling over and over in the deep snow, while the *clicking* of his jaws, as he snapped eagerly at each member of the pack that by turns beset him, was distinctly audible. The powerful dog, already mentioned, secured him at last by fixing his muzzle deeply into the breast of the prostrate animal. This, however, did not prevent the wolf giving some fearful wounds to the other dogs which beset him; and, accordingly, with the permission of the gentleman who had led the chase, I threw myself from my horse, and gave the game the *coup-de-grace* with a dirk-knife which I had about me. Two of our party soon after joined us, each with a prairie-wolf hanging to his saddle-bow; and the others gradually collecting, we returned to Chicago, contented at last with the result of our morning's sport.

It was with no enviable feelings, I assure you, that, on making my arrangements an hour ago to start in the new line of stage-coaches which has just been established between this point and St. Louis, I found myself compelled to part with the friend to whom I was chiefly indebted for my share in the glorious sports I have just attempted to describe to you—the four-footed companion of my last six weeks' rambles. I remember being once struck with the remark of an ingenious writer in the Library of Useful Knowledge, when, in discussing the real and the relative value of horses, he observes that the commonest hackney, if in every respect suiting his owner, is priceless to the possessor. A favorite horse, in fact, though his estimation may only depend upon the whim of his master, is one of this world's goods which can never be thoroughly replaced. It is not, however, when the charge of such property falls exclusively to grooms and others from one end of the year to another that you feel its value: the stall-fed palfrey, which you drive along a turnpike from one hotel to another, and abandon when he falls sick for some other means of conveyance, with as little concern as you would exchange your trunk for a portmanteau, or *vice versa*, has but little hold on one's feelings in comparison with the hearty animal with which you

wander away, where he meets with no care but such as you bestow upon him; and when you in turn become wholly dependent upon him for overcoming distances and difficulties between places so remote from each other, that not only your comfort, but sometimes your personal safety, depend upon accomplishing the intervals within certain periods; when you push ahead through falling sleet, ford rivers, plunge through snow-banks, or cross morasses, where the matted grass, spreading its carpet over the shaking slough, embarrasses and wearies the step of your sagacious quadruped, while it prevents his feet from sinking into the dangerous quagmire beneath. Three weeks of such intercourse between man and brute are like three rainy days when one is shut up in a country-house with strangers: they cherish a fellowship more cordial than years of ordinary intercourse could engender. It is no little consolation to me that I leave my Bucephalus in excellent hands; nor does this necessary separation so engross my sympathies that I have none to spare for other partings. Upon these however, I shall not dilate here; though you must not be surprised to find me returning more than once hereafter to characters, scenes, and incidents at Chicago, which I have hitherto left untouched.

BANKS OF THE AU SABLE, ILLINOIS, *Jan. 15.*

IT was about eight o'clock, and a bright, cold morning, when a handsome four-horse stage-coach, built in New York, and placed with more liberality than judgment on a route where a broad-tired, low-hung, and light wagon would be much more appropriate,—drove up to my quarters at Chicago; and, having received my luggage, crossed the river on the ice, and was, a few moments after, traveling through the deep snow over the Grand Prairie. My fellow-passengers were, a respectable, middle-aged female and a smartly-dressed young man of amiable appearance, whose handsome broadcloth suit, worn as a traveling-dress, bespoke the favored beau of some country village, or possibly a thriving young clerk from the city, engaged upon some agency business, and traveling in the style which he thought would best comport with the dignity of his employers. The driver was also accompanied on the box by a well-made young half-blood Chippewa, of about five-and-twenty, who had come down from Mackinac to seek employment, and was now going further south for the same object. The air being rather sharp on the prairie, the lady took her seat between the young gentleman and myself, and thus wedged in together, we contrived to keep very comfortable; though our near neighborhood did not render us more communicative than people

generally are after an early breakfast. We merely exchanged the ordinary commonplaces which custom exacts from people thus thrown together; and then, unless when a wolf passing near our track, or a particularly large pack of grouse rising before us, called forth some exclamation, but few words were spoken by any of the company. At length, after having counted six wolves within twice as many miles, we approached a grove of timber, where, while the trees grew quite densely in the centre, a few thin rows shot out like a reef of rocks from the shadowy island far into the prairie. Here, on the edge of a deep gully, through which winds the River Au Plaine, was the log-tavern at which the first stage of our day's journey, being twelve miles, concluded. The horses were in a complete foam with their exertions in getting through the deep snow-drifts across the prairie, and I easily persuaded the driver to abandon the comfortable but cumbersome vehicle which had brought us so far, and hitch his smoking team, which had still twelve miles to go, to a rough but strongly-built sled before the door. My fellow-passengers approved the arrangement, and subsequent events proved it a very fortunate one; for so deep was the snow on many parts of the road afterward traversed, that it would have been impracticable to get a wheel-carriage forward, and it must have been deserted on the prairie. There was much to do, however, about our new equipage, before we could get started; and while our driver looked after his horses, one of the passengers had to shovel the snow out of the sleigh, another, to drive a pin through the tongue, in order to fasten on the leaders; and a third, after filling the bottom with hay, to adjust the baggage, etc. All this, with the aid of the stout Chippewa and the active young eastern traveler, was soon effected; and the former, taking his seat with the driver on a board in front, while the latter shared half of my buffalo robes, and stowed himself upon the hay with me in the rear; *madame* was well accommodated, with the cushions taken from the stage, on a trunk placed in the middle; and some heated stones being brought from the house and placed beneath her feet, just as we started, no grandmother could sit more comfortably in her cushioned pew in old Trinity. A fast drive of twelve miles brought us at noon to another island of timber, where a little piquant girl of sixteen, with sloe-black eyes and glossy locks as dark as night, arranged a plain but neat meal for us, and gave a relish to the entertainment by loosing one of the most vivacious tongues I had heard wag in the last three months. Here we changed horses, and a ride of sixteen miles more brought us about nightfall to a place called "Walker's Grove," where two or three log-huts were sheltered

from the north wind under an island of tall timber, and in one of which we have established ourselves for the night. A pile of bur-oak, which makes a capital fire, flames up the enormous wooden chimney before me, and a number of stout yeomen around it, engaged in discussing the price of horses on the Wabash, prevent me, while handling a matter of such moment, from enlarging more upon the few objects of interest which have presented themselves today.

OTTAWA, ILLINOIS, *January 16.*

I was hardly dressed this morning, when my only remaining fellow-traveler—the lady and the half-blood having parted company last evening—called me to the door to "see the cloud of *prairie hens* before it." I looked out, and there indeed, true enough, the oaks within gun-shot of the porch were so loaded with grouse, that they showed more like a flock of pigeons than a covey of game birds. Having broken my gun, however, it was intolerably vexatious to see such capital shots thrown away; while these fine birds, in those districts where I was prepared to bag them, were too wild to approach within shooting distance at all.

The sleigh soon after came to the door, our driver having diminished his team by two horses, to meet probably the reduction of passengers already mentioned; and about a hundred yards from the house, we crossed a broad brook, known as the Au Sable River, and commenced ascending the bank beyond. But the snow was deep, and the heavy drift having had its surface frozen over during the preceding night, our single pair of horses were unable to drag through it the clumsy sled behind them. They plunged in up to their chests. "Go ahead, Sam! gie up, Major!" shouted the driver. But *Sam* was thoroughly planted; while the *Major*, in trying to sustain his military character by obeying orders, gave one spring, and, floundering over the traces, was buried in the snow up to his crupper, and placed, *nolens volens*, in full as quiescent a condition as the already settled Sam. For all of us to get out and take hold of the bits was the next move; but it wouldn't do. Sam, indeed, seemed a little inclined to make a retrograde movement, by kicking out the footboard with his heels; while the Major, having gathered new energy for another charge, wasted his fire in lifting up his knees as high as his mouth, and ineffectually throwing his fore hoofs in advance on the crusted snow; handling his feet the while much after the manner of the rampant unicorn on a calico stamp, who, unmindful of the mottoed garter he treads under his foot, so bravely paws the crown which the complaisant lion is pushing toward him.

The driver at last became convinced of the necessity of returning for another pair of horses; and a young colt called Blackhawk, with a hoary old plough-horse named Judge, were, after a little delay, procured, and placed in advance of Sam and the Major on the top of the bank. Poor Sam seemed to dislike having the Judge's fetlocks brought so immediately in contact with his nose, they being nearly on a horizontal line; and he was accordingly inclined to retreat upon his haunches, beneath which the snow formed so easy a cushion; but a single crack from the driver's whip sent the Major charging so vigorously upon Blackhawk, that the sable young chief gave a bound which carried us through the difficulty in a trice, and sent our vehicle skimming far over the prairie.

The grove in which we had passed the night soon vanished from sight, and a boundless expanse of snow-covered surface lay like an ocean before us. The arch of the clear blue sky seemed to spring at once from the silvered earth, which shown under the bright January sun with an intensity almost painful to the eye. The blue vault above, and the white plain below, were the only objects that met its glances as they roamed for miles around; yet no one could complain of sameness in the tints of a picture so vast, a scene so illimitable. The immensity of the prospect seemed to exclude the idea of monotony, and perfect solitude was only wanting in such a scene to make one feel its grandeur. The lively rattle of my companion, however, whose society, after traveling so long entirely alone, I found no slight acquisition, prevented me from realizing its full effect; and when, after riding for about twelve miles, an island of timber hove in sight, while the beautiful sky of the morning clouded over, and the cold wind, which began to set in from the west, indicated that the twelve miles we had yet to travel before we should reach the first house across this arm of the prairie would be anything but agreeable,—I was contented to wrap myself as closely as possible in my buffalo robe, and join him in a game of *prairie loo.* Lest you might search vainly in Hoyle for this pastime, I must inform you that the game consists merely in betting upon the number of wild animals seen by either party toward the side of the vehicle on which he is riding, a wolf or deer counting ten, and a grouse one. The game is a hundred; and you may judge of the abundance of these animals from our getting through several games before dinner,—my companion looing me with eleven wolves. Some of these fellows would stand looking at us within half-gunshot, as we rode by them; while the grouse would rise continually from under our very horses' feet.

Before we had got through the twenty-four miles, the scene enacted at starting was to be repeated with improvement; for on coming to the edge of a frozen gully, our two leaders, in their anxiety to avoid former difficulties, gave such a spring that they sunk through the ice to their shoulders on the opposite side; while the wheel-horses, being thrown down, were driven by the runners of the sleigh against the sharp edges of the ice thus exposed, and one of them was terribly lacerated. It was the unfortunate Sam, who, poor fellow, not having been watered since the morning, lay quietly on his side in the traces, with his fore-legs up the slope, and his hinder ones in the pool, eating the snow thus brought in contact with his mouth, apparently perfectly unconscious of his wounds. Blackhawk and the Judge, of course, came to an anchor when they found such an accumulated weight dragging behind them; while the spirited Major seemed to be thoroughly dejected at this second discomfiture, and allowed us to turn him over and put him on his feet with scarcely the interposition of a struggle. Not far from the scene of this catastrophe, we crossed the Au Page, a narrow stream, with smooth banks, utterly divested of shrubbery; and after, in the next eight miles, encountering two or three tremendous snow-banks, where our horses were frequently immersed to their cruppers, and whence nothing but the leaders, from their firm footing beyond, dragging the wheel-horses through the heavy drift, could have extricated us, we reached a beautiful grove of elms and oaks, and stopped to change our worn-out team.

Entering a log-cabin, not at all differing from the usual dwellings of the frontier settlers, I found a choice collection of books in one corner,—a volume, a fine old edition, of Algernon Sidney's works being the first book I took up; and, upon entering into conversation with the occupants of the cabin, I found that degree of general cultivation which, though not unfrequently met with on the frontier, still always strikes a stranger with novelty; and yet I know no reason while the fullest expanding of the intellect is incompatible with the handling of an axe, or the most luxuriant development of the imagination with following the plough. The farmer, of all operatives, has, perhaps, the most time for improvement; and when he dwells in a land where, while Nature showers her choicest bounties, man passes toward it from every side, and contributes on his new coming to the general stock of ideas, keeping, by this lively interchange, those already afloat in active circulation, there is everything in his circumstances to make him acute and reflective, and to liberalize his mind, if not to polish his manners.

It would be giving you a wrong impression, however, did I allow you to gather from this that the oldest western settlers of this country are by any means so familiar with books as the emigrants from the East; for among the latter there are many persons of altered circumstances, who, having once enjoyed better opportunities for literary culture, carry the traces of their old habits with them into the new scenes to which they so readily adapt themselves. Fluency of language, with an ease and power of expression which sometimes swells to the dignity of eloquence, and often displays itself in terms of originality at once humorous and forcible, constitute the conversational resources of the western man; but as his knowledge is gathered almost altogether from conversation, he wants that exact acquaintance with facts and things which enriches the intellectual armory of his eastern brother in a similar situation of life. My opportunities as yet of forming an opinion might, perhaps, be questioned by one who did not know that the southern part of Michigan, and the northern sections of Illinois, are settled by people from almost every State in the Union. Having now traversed them both, I may venture the above observation, at least with you.

A dinner of grouse at this place came very opportunely after our keen ride of twenty-four miles over the prairie without once stopping; and, by way of varying our customary fare of bacon and corn-bread along the road, we purchased a few brace of these fine birds for a mere trifle, there being at hand a coopful of them just caught alive upon the premises.

It was just sunset when, after riding about thirteen miles over a dreary-looking prairie, we came suddenly to one of those *steppes* into which these singular plains sometimes break so beautifully; and, looking down over two broad platforms, which successively projected their flat surfaces and angular edges below us, beheld the Illinois River winding through the lowest meadow, and receiving its tributary, the Fox River, opposite the little village of Ottawa. It seemed to repose upon a rich alluvial flat, with the rocky bluffs of the Illinois rising in a regular line to the height of seventy or eighty feet immediately in the rear; while their rugged and varying outline, both above and below, towered opposite to a much greater height. The warm light of the setting sun resting upon their mossy edges, and touching with freshness an evergreen that sprouted here and there among the cliffs, while the rising mists of evening imparted a bluish tint to the distant windings of the smooth valley below, gave an Italian softness to the landscape but little in unison with the icy rigors that enchained the streams to which in summer it must owe its greatest beauty. A mile or

two farther brought us over the frozen river to the comfortable frame-house from which this letter is dated.

Ottawa, which is situated a few miles above the head of steamboat navigation on the Illinois, is, from its central situation, gradually becoming a place of some commercial importance, though still a mere hamlet in size. It was within six miles of this place that the worst of the Indian horrors were perpetrated during the difficulties with the Sacs and Foxes in 1832. You must remember the newspaper accounts of every member of two families being butchered, except two young girls, who were carried into captivity, and afterward recovered from the Indians.* There was a singular fatality attending this melancholy affair, which makes it worth while to recall some of the particulars. According to my informant, the heads of both families, who lived in the same or adjoining houses, had more than once removed their wives and children into Ottawa, upon false alarms of the approach of the Indians; and one of them, from some new warning on the very day on which the event took place, was again moving the united establishment in wagons to the same place of security, when he met the other, who so opposed and ridiculed the idea, that they returned together. An hour or two after, they were at work within a few yards of the door, when a band of Indians appeared, and with a triumphant yell surrounded the house in an instant. Armed only with their tools of husbandry, they did not hesitate to make an attack upon an enemy that outnumbered them so as to make the attempt to get into the house and reach their rifles perfect madness. It is needless to add that they were shot down, tomahawked, and scalped in an instant; not, however, as some say, before they had witnessed some of the atrocities practised upon

* Mr. Schoolcraft says that no female captive is ever saved by the Indians from base motives, or need fear the violation of her honor: "The whole history of their wars may be challenged for a solitary instance of the violation of female chastity. When they resolve to spare life, they also resolve to spare that reputation without which life is not worth possessing. They treat them with kindness and attention, carrying them dry across rivers, and directing—what with them is accounted an act of distinguished attention—that their hair shall be combed every morning. The precise reason for this trait of their character has never been fully explained. Innate principles of virtue can hardly be supposed to be sufficient to produce so universal an effect, though it would be uncharitable to deny that they have their share. It is asserted that the Indians believe that the taking of such a dishonorable advantage of their female prisoners would have the effect to destroy their luck in hunting. It would be considered as a trait of weakness and effeminacy in a warrior, unworthy of his fame and reputation for manly achievement. It would excite the ridicule of his companions, and, as they believe, be displeasing to the Great Spirit."—*Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley, p. 394.*

the feebler members of their families. These, before and after death, are too shocking to mention.

"Why, sir," said an Illinois man to me, who was on the spot shortly afterward, "those Indians behaved most *ridiculous*. They dashed children's brains against the door-posts; they cut off their heads; they tore—;" but the detail to which my informant applied so quaint an epithet is one that I would not think for a moment of giving you. I must not forget to add, that the two surviving females, after losing every near blood-relative in this horrible manner, have lately found legal protectors, and are now settled in life as respectable married woman. I had previously, even as far north as the borders of Michigan in Indiana, seen stockades erected in the open prairie as a place of refuge for the settlers, with other similar marks of the late border-strife, but had no idea, till this evening, that I was approaching the seat of the bloodiest acts of the unhappy contest. The neutral Indians, who disappeared from this part of the country at the time, are now, I am told, dispersed again in large numbers over the neighborhood. They are perfectly harmless; but, thou treated with great kindness, by the new emigrants, there will probably never again be much confidence between them and the old settlers. The latter somehow seem to have long regarded the Indians as hereditary enemies; and the events of 1832 have given new vigor to dislikes which seemed to be gradually losing their rancor. A man who has to plough with a heavy rifle, ready-loaded, slung to his back, day after day, while he fears even to send his child to the spring for a pail of water, may be well excused for being warm upon a subject which must thus fill his thoughts and harass his mind throughout each hour of the day. It is therefore useless to argue with an Illinois "Indian-hater." What cares he for the "lean famine, quartering steel, and climbing fire," which you tell him often beset the red man's wigwam before his ancestors made good their footing on another's land. He thinks but of the frantic outrages he has witnessed in his own day. He thinks of his often-abandoned husbandry, "while that the coulter rusts" corrupting in its own fertility. He thinks of his butchered friends and neighbors,—of his wife and offspring slaughtered upon his hearthstone,—and asks bitterly how you could

> "Look to see
> The blind and bloody savage with his foul hand
> Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
> Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
> And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls;
> Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
> While the mad mothers with their howls confused
> Do break the clouds."

An accumulation of horrid images, which shows with what fearful fidelity Shakspeare would have painted Indian warfare, had these wild tragedies of our day been acted in his.

BOYD'S GROVE, ILLINOIS, *Jan. 25th, 1834.*

IT was so long since I had seen a stone at all deserving the name of a rock, that I took a good deal of satisfaction in scaling the bluffs of the Illinois, and traversing the adjacent ravines, be-before getting out on the prairie, the morning that I left Ottawa. In one of these rocky gullies,—which run generally at right angles to the river, and with their precipitous walls in one place, and cavernous passages beneath the jutting limestone in another, often form some picturesque dell, or afford a romantic glimpse of the open country beyond,—I saw the first cascade I have met with since leaving Pennsylvania. The fall was not more than ten feet; but the column of water, being frozen in a solid sheet, as white as the purest porcelain, presented a very singular appearance as it raised its pale glistening front beneath a canopy of stunted cedars, whose green branches impended from the rocks above. Our sleigh, after winding for some time among this broken ground, and passing over one or two small but beautiful pieces of bottom land laying among the ravines, reached at last the top of the bluff, where, instead of descending on the other side, the level prairie extended as far as the eye could reach beyond. A few hours' drive brought us to a log-cabin, which was our place for dining and changing horses, and here we found that, owing to the newness of the route, arrangements were not yet completed for the public conveyances going farther. Hearing a stranger speaking in terms of enthusiasm of the fine view from "Starved Rock,"*—a detached crag some 250 feet high, on the banks of the Illinois, where one band of Indians was surrounded and starved to death by another (I refer you to "Flint's Valley of the Mississippi" for the legend),*—I made arrangements to visit the spot in the morning.

A chill north-easter swept over the bleak prairie as my traveling companion and myself, mounted upon two miserable nags, neither of which was shod, struck on an Indian trail, that brought us in an hour's ride to the craggy and precipitous banks of the Vermilion River, which it was necessary to cross. A sickly-looking but rather interesting woman came out of a miserable log-hut —beside which, housed under a few boards, stood a handsome barouche—to direct us where to descend the bank; and my friend

* See Fergus' Historical Series, No. 3. "The Last of the Illinois." By John Dean Caton, LL.D.

on foot leading his horse, mine followed trembling after him; and, notwithstanding the steep path was glazed with ice, we descended the first pitch in safety.

Pausing for a moment, the confused masses of rock, with trees and shrubs of all kinds growing in their crevices, reminded me, as I looked around, of more than one scene of the kind in the river counties of my native State. It was now my turn to lead down the next pitch, which led to the frozen bed of the river. Upon gaining the edge, I perceived that the descent was a perfect glare of ice; and pausing a moment to hand a loaded gun, which I carried, to my companion, lest it might be discharged in the accident which I anticipated, my horse lost his footing even as I turned in the saddle, and falling flat over upon me, down we slid together. I had not gone two yards, however, before a small jutting rock brought me, but little bruised, to an anchorage, while my unfortunate consort, after sliding over a part of my person, went, though struggling fearfully to regain his feet, slipping to the bottom. He landed at last erect, with his face up the ascent, and though now on the level ice of the river, the poor brute seemed to think he was still midway on the declivity he had been hurried over so roughly; for without looking at all behind him, he stood trembling for an instant, and then, in spite of all the outcry we could raise to keep him back, commenced ascending to where we stood, and actually persevered till he had gained the place from whence he had started. The only way now to effect our purpose was for one to go below, and the other to drive the horses down to him. This we indeed did, and I do not know when I have been more amused, than upon seeing my worthy Rozinante, as if taught by past experience, quietly—when he found he must go—placing himself upon his haunches, and sliding down the little hill with a degree of coolness and skill that would have been envied by the boldest schoolboy on *Flattenbarrack.*

Crossing the Vermilion, we were compelled to drive our horses in the same way up the bank on the opposite side; and by catching hold of the branches of trees, drag ourselves after them as we best could. Once on the height, nothing but a level plain of rich prairie land lay between us and the bluffs of the Illinois. It was crossed here and there at intervals of a few miles with Indian trails, about a foot in width, and worn as deep as if they had been trod for centuries. They ran in various directions, and were generally as straight as the flight of an arrow. A heavy rain throughout the previous night had swept all the snow from the prairie, and these black lines drawn over its brown surface were

now perceptible at a great distance. A long reach of woodland immediately before us indicated our approach to the Illinois bottoms; but on entering the timbered ground, where the snow still lingered in considerable quantities, we found ourselves on the slippery bluffs, a hundred feet above the level of the river opposite, without the possibility of descending to its bed. These bluffs were divided at intervals by the romantic ravines already described; having now discovered that we had entirely missed the road to "The Starved Rock," it only remained for us to attempt descending through these passages, and find the place by a route of our own. We led the way by turns, and urging our unwilling horses down the frozen beds of the little streams which impart their coolness in autumn to these sequestered dells, we tried three ravines in succession, without attaining our object. One would bring us up against a dead wall of limestone, in the crevices of whose base the rill we had been following suddenly disappeared; a second carried us to the abrupt edge of a precipice, about fifty feet above the river, whose rich bottoms, extending far away below, reminded me, with the occasional copses and detached clumps of trees which studded them, of points of views in the valley of the Mohawk. Nothing, on so small a scale, could be more picturesque than the nook to which the third ravine led us. It was to the upper edge of a double cascade, over the second fall of which an arch of rock projected, so as to shut out from view the basin into which the water finally fell below. The passage through which we reached the spot was a mere fissure in the side-hill; and when, not wishing to get my feet wet, I urged my horse to the brink of the little cascade, the long icicles pendent from the hanging rock above were almost within reach of my riding-whip. A number of gnarled and stunted cedars, "moist trees, that have outlived the eagle," fling their dusky branches over the chasm, and when summer foilage glitters on the tall stems whose naked boughs project above them, the sun must be wholly excluded from this cool retreat.

Our horses were so fagged out when we extricated ourselves from this ravine, that we did not think it well to try another; and my companion being afraid of freezing his feet, which were wet from his having dismounted at the most difficult parts of the descent, I was sorry to be compelled to give up the search and return to our lodgings, after an eight hours' ride, without having seen the interesting point we had taken so much trouble to attain.*

* An unknown correspondent has politely furnished the author with the following account of this interesting point, as given in "a letter from a friend still roaming over the beautiful prairies of Illinois."

The mail-contractor, resident at Chicago, had arrived at the farm-house during our absence; and hearing that two gentlemen were detained upon the road, had, with great politeness, at once taken measures to send us on the next morning. The room, too,

"I climbed the Indian path until I reached the summit of Starved Rock. This celebrated rock is said to be two hundred and fifty feet high. It is a stupendous pile, nearly as large at the top as at the base, and is accessible at one place only; in every other direction it is nearly perpendicular, and more than half of its base is washed by the Illinois, which is here from three to four feet deep.

"The summit is circular and almost level, containing about an acre; and now has on it a thick growth of young timber. There is still lying a great quantity of the bones of the Indians who were starved to death by a hostile tribe. I picked up on the side of the pass, and dug out of the earth, several arrow-points. At one place, where there appears a possibility of scaling the rock, an intrenchment is dug and breastwork thrown up. After passing an hour on the summit, we descended to our boat at the foot of the rock, and proceeded on our journey."

"*Starved Rock.*"—This remarkable isolated hill, termed by the French *voyageurs* Le Rocher, or Rockfort, as Mr. Schoolcraft calls it, is described by that accurate traveler as an elevated cliff on the left bank of the Illinois, consisting of parallel layers of white sandstone. It is not less than two hundred and fifty feet high, perpendicular on three sides, and washed at its base by the river. On the fourth side it is connected with the adjacent range of bluffs by a narrow peninsular ledge, which can only be ascended by a precipitous winding path. The summit of the rock is level, and contains about three-fourths of an acre. It is covered with a soil of several feet in depth, bearing a growth of young trees. Strong and almost inaccessible by nature, this natural battlement was the scene of a desperate conflict between the fierce and haughty Pottawatomies and one band of the Illinois Indians; the latter fled to this place for refuge from the fury of their enemies. The post could not be carried by assault, and tradition says that the beseigers finally attempted, after many repulses, to reduce it by starvation. This siege, as is remarked by a popular writer, is singularly characteristic on either side of those remarkable traits of savage character, undaunted resolution, and insatiable and ever vigilant thirst for vengeance. Its result is well told in "Tales of the Border," the newly-published work of Judge Hall. The pangs of hunger, the tortures of thirst, pressed upon the besieged; but they maintained their post with invincible courage, determined rather to die of exhaustion than to afford their enemies the triumph of killing them in battle or exposing them at the stake. Every stratagem which they attempted was discovered and defeated. The scorching sun that beat upon their towering hold maddened them to taste the cool stream that glided beneath it; but when they endeavored to procure water during the night by lowering vessels attached to cords of bark into the river, the vigilant besiegers detected the design, and placed a guard in canoes to prevent its execution. They all perished—one, and one only excepted. The last surviving warriors defended the entrance so well that the enemy could neither enter nor discover the fatal progress of the work of death; and when at last, all show of resistance having ceased, and all signs of life disappeared, the victors ventured cautiously to approach, they found but one survivor—a squaw, whom they adopted into their own tribe, and who was yet living when the first white man penetrated this region.*

* Charlevoix, Schoolcraft, Hall.

in which we had slept before—four in two beds and three on the floor—had now been vacated by five of its occupants, and my companion and I each appropriated a couch to himself. We were hardly warm under the cover, however, before the tramping of horses, with the sound of travelers' voices, was heard without; and the good dame thrust her head into the room, in the vain expectation of showing them an unoccupied bed. My companion pretended to be in a sound sleep; and I intimated that I should betake myself to my buffalo-robe and the floor, in case a bedfellow were thrust in upon me: whereat the kind lady was exceeding miffed; and we could hear her through the board partition, a moment afterward, expressing herself after this amiable fashion:—"Ugh! great people truly!—a bed to themselves, the hogs! They travel together—and they eat together—and they eat enough, too,—and yet they can't sleep together!" Here the husband, a respectable, middle-aged man, who did everything to make our situation comfortable during the thirty-six hours we spent at his cabin, interposed, and silenced his better half; and, the newcomers wrapping themselves in their cloaks before the fire, in a few minutes all became still about the establishment.

The good dame, who must have been a fine-looking woman in her day, and was, I believe, in spite of her scolding ways, really well-disposed toward us at heart, gave us a capital cup of coffee and a kind farewell in the morning. A four-horse wagon, with an active driver, quickly accomplished a mile of rough road through the grove, and brought us once more to the edge of the smooth prairie. I can conceive nothing more desolate than the appearance of that boundless plain. The fires had traversed it in the autumn as far as the eye could reach, and the snow having now disappeared entirely from the upland, the black and charred surface was all that met our vision wherever it wandered: a dark sullen sky which lowered overhead added not a little to the gloominess of the prospect; and the day being excessively cold, our ride for the next fifteen miles over this dreary plain was anything but agreeable. At last we came to some broken ground, dotted here and there with a handful of shrubbery, from which every moment a pack of grouse, and occasionally a bevy of quail, would rise. The little village of Hennepin—called after Father Hennepin—next hove in sight; though it lay so sheltered along the banks of the Illinois that we were nearly upon the hamlet before its vicinity was discoverable.

After stopping an hour or two to dine and feed our horses, we left the driver to take a circuitous route down the steep bank, which, though not rocky, is about sixty feet high, and very precipi-

tous on that side of the river; while my friend and I descended to the ice, and walked over the river, which was here a broad and noble stream, with some beautiful alluvial islands on its bosom. The difference of temperature here and on the bleak prairie above was astonishing; and when I sat down upon a fallen tree among the tangled vines of the rich bottom opposite to Hennepin, and watched a flock of green parroquets fluttering among the wych-elms which here and there skirted the shore, while the sun, for a moment piercing his murky veil, touched with gold the icicles that glazed their drooping branches, I could fancy myself transported to a different climate. The driver overtook us at last, and then we commenced making our way through a timbered bottom, which, for appearance of rank fertility, excelled any spot I have ever beheld. The trees were of enormous size, and seemed chained together at every point by huge vines, which clambered to their very summits, locking the stately stems in their ponderous embrace, and clasping each outer bough with some twining tendril. Having thus secured its prey on one tree, the vine would seem, like a living animal, to have bounded to another, and fastened its eager grasp upon some limb as yet untouched. Beneath the whole an interminable growth of underwood, protected by the woven canopy above, and flourishing rankly in its living fetters,

> "Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,
> Put forth disordered twigs."

A half-hour's ride carried us through this teeming region to the foot of a steep and open-wooded hill, which ascending with some difficulty, we came out once more upon the prairie, and the change of temperature instantaneous. The road over the dry grassy plain was very good, however, for the first six or eight miles; and as the evening began to close in intensely cold, we rattled them off in a very short time. At last we came to a deep frozen gully, in crossing which our leaders bruised themselves so badly by breaking through the ice, that when we reached a spot of the same kind, but rather worse, a mile or two in advance, the frightened animals recoiled from the place, and refused to cross it. Our driver, a doughty little chap, about four feet eleven, who rejoiced in the name of Samson, and was a capital whip by-the-by, after using every exertion to get his whole team over, was at last compelled to give up the point, and proceed to detach the leaders from the wheel-horses. This, with our aid, was soon done; and my companion remaining with the leaders on one side, Samson and I made a dash at the frozen brook, and, breaking through in the midst, the horses gave such a spring to free them-

selves from the wagon, that the swingletree-bolt snapped; and had not the heroic little champion held on to the reins as tenaciously as did his namesake to the gates of Gaza, we might have been left a prey to the next drove of Philistinean wolves that should rove the prairie in quest of a supper.

Samson, however, was true to his name; and with a mighty arm bringing up his foaming steeds all standing, we crawled over the head of the rampant wagon, (the hind-wheels only had gone through the ice), and sprang to the firm ground. The swingletree was soon tinkered fast again; but now came the difficulty of getting the unwilling leaders over, who, it is presumed, had been no uninterested spectators of what had just been going forward: coaxing and whipping availed nothing; and we at last succeeded only by buckling two pair of reins together and passing them over the brook, two of us pulling on the horses' mouths, while the third applied a smart castigation behind. One of the poor animals again broke in, and floundered dreadfully before he reached a firm footing on the other side. But this was not the worst; our poor little Samson, in attempting to jump, floundered in up to his knees, and suffered much inconvenience from it afterward. The evening was indeed so cold, that our wheel-horses, who were coated with ice, their long tails being actually frozen solid, were in danger of freezing to death, had we been compelled to delay much longer. But, placing now the leaders on the firm ground beyond them, one smart pull served to extricate the wagon from the hole and deliver us from our quandary.

We had five or six miles still to go before reaching a house; and feeling some anxiety about Samson's wet feet, we urged him to put the horses—nothing loath when once started—to the top of their speed. He did indeed drive furiously; but when we arrived at the house whence I write, the poor fellow's feet were frozen. Rushing at once to the fire, he would undoubtedly have lost them, had there not chanced to be a physician present, who directed us what to do. The good-humored little patient was removed without delay to the back part of the room; and we commenced pouring water into his boots until they melted from his feet, the temperature of the water being gradually heightened until it became blood-warm, while a bucket of ice-water stood by for the sufferer to thrust his feet in, whenever the returning circulation became too violent for him to endure. In the morning, though his feet were dreadfully swollen, he was enabled, by tying them up in thick horse-blankets, to move about, and even return with his team. To the simple and judicious suggestions of the traveling physician present, our little hero was, in all probability,

indebted for escaping a most awful calamity; a settler in this neighborhood having lost both legs a few days since by an exposure similar to Samson's.

I am now staying at the house of a flourishing farmer, whose sturdy frame, bold features, and thick long black hair, would, with his frank address, afford as fine a specimen of the western borderer as one could meet with, and never allow you to suspect that ten or fifteen years ago he was a New-York tradesman. He lives, like all other people of this country, in a log-cabin, which has many comforts about it, however, not usually found in these primitive domicils. Having a large family, with no neighbors nearer than ten miles on one side and twenty on the other, he maintains a schoolmaster to instruct his children: the room I occupy at night being fitted up with desks and benches as a school-room. His farm, which lies along the edge of a beautiful and well-watered grove, supplies him with almost everything he wants; and having once pursued a different mode of life, he seems now to realize the full independence of his situation, more even than those who have always been brought up as farmers. I told him this morning, as he sallied out to cut wood, with his two sons, axe in hand, all clad in their belted capotes and white woollen hoods, that I should like to meet his sun-burnt features and independent step in Broadway, to see how many of his old acquaintances would recognize the pale mechanic in the brown backwoodsman. He promised me, if he came in winter, to appear with the guise in which I then beheld him; adding, in western phraseology, "The way in which folks'll stare, squire, will be a *caution*."

After being detained here some days waiting for the St. Louis mail-wagon, and losing my traveling-companion, who, having bought a horse, has gone on by himself, I have concluded that it would never do to go out of this country without visiting Galena and the mining country; and, as there is now a public conveyance thither, I shall take the first opportunity to go with it. I have amused myself for the last three nights in watching for wolves by moonlight, at the edge of the wood, a few hundred yards from the house. They come howling round the house after nightfall, and if one is "in luck" at all, are easily shot. But last night, after leaving my position but for five minutes, I heard the report of a rifle; and hastening to the spot, where a lad stayed to fill my place for a moment, I found that a gray and a black wolf, of the largest kind, had approached suddenly within two or three yards of the muzzle of his gun, and startled him so that he missed them both. In the confident hope of their return—for the bait that we had thrown about the place was still there—I took the little fel-

low's place, and wrapping myself in a buffalo-skin, lay watching on the ground till nearly daybreak; and the enemy then not making his appearance, I was glad to creep shivering to bed.

Upon entering my room, which contained two beds, I observed, after striking a light, that the one opposite to mine was occupied by some newcomers; while a sheet suspended from the ceiling near the pillow, and concealing the phrenology of its occupants from view, was evidently meant as a *caveat* against reconnoitring that part of the apartment. I had some piquant reflections when a respectable-looking traveler and a pretty young woman, who I was told was a bride on her way to St. Louis, breakfasted with us the next morning.

You shall hear from me next at Galena. Till then, farewell!

GALENA, UPPER MISSISSIPPI, *Feb. 1.*

A FURIOUS squall of snow, which would have rendered it impossible to keep a given road in crossing the prairie, subsided before nightfall, on the day that I left Boyd's Grove, bound for the Upper Mississippi; and as the calm clear sky of evening succeeded, our sleigh glided over the open plain at a rate which soon made the cabins behind us disappear in the distance; while four fleet horses, with a good driver, and but one passenger, swiftly accomplished the short stage of twelve miles, and brought us to the room where we were to pass the night. The intervening prairie, for the first six miles, was high and level, with not a stick of timber,—one broad snow-covered plain, where you could see the dark figure of a wolf for miles off, as it stood in relief against the white unbroken surface. A prospect more bleak and lonely, when night is closing in, and you press toward some distant grove, whose treetops can not yet be discovered above the monotonous plains, is inconceivable. Presently, however, you come to a break in the prairie; a slight descent next shelters you somewhat from the wind, and now you can discover a wood, which hitherto had appeared many miles off, or perhaps was not perceptible at all, that has pushed a scattered clump of trees here and there, like an advanced guard under cover of the ravine. You come to the brink of another platform, and you are on the edge of a grove; while for twenty miles ahead the eye ranges over what looks like a shallow basin of immense extent, broken occasionally by dusky masses, which seem rather to repose upon than to spring out of its surface; such was the view in advance, from a point about six miles from Boyd's Grove. The elevation from which we descended was not more than twenty feet, and it commanded a prospect of as many miles. It was like looking from the edge of

a snow-covered desert upon a frozen lake, with its isles, headlands, and scattered rocks, and its waters riveted as fast as they. The rosy rays of the setting sun still lingered over the scene, as on one they longed to set free from the icy chains which bound it; while the calm pale moon grew momentarily more bright, as if her cold beams borrowed lustre from the extent of pure white surface over which they shone.

A single room, miserably built of logs,—the interstices of which were so unskilfully filled up with mud that I could hear the night-wind whistling through them as we drove up to the door,—was to be our lodging for the night. A couple of rifles, with a powder-horn and a pair of Indian blankets, lay without, and two painted Pottawatomies were crouched on the hearth, as I entered the cabin. One of them, a slight but elegantly-formed youth of twenty, sprang at once to his feet; while the other, a dark ill-looking negro-faced fellow, retained his squatting posture. They were dressed in complete suits of buckskin; both having their ears bored in several places, with long drops of silver pendent in thick bunches therefrom; while broad plates suspended over their chests, with armlets of the same metal, made quite a rich display. Their dress* was, however, the only point in which they resem-

* "The usual dress of the men (among the northern tribes) at the present day consists of a figured cotton shirt; a blanket, or French capote of blue cloth; a pair of blue, green, or red cloth metasses or leggins; an azeeaun or breech cloth, and moccasins of dressed deer-skin. The metasses are generally ornamented, and a garter of colored worsted tied around the knee. The front fold of the azeeaun is also ornamented around the edges. A necklace of wampum, or a silver crescent, or both, are often worn together with silver arm-bands and wrist-bands. The latter are not exclusively confined to chiefs, so far as we have observed, but their use depends rather upon the ability of the individual to purchase them. Ear-rings are common to both sexes. A knife is commonly worn in a scabbard confined under the string or narrow belt which sustains both the azeeaun and the metasses. The head is ornamented with a band of skin, dressed with the hair or pelt on, surmounted with feathers. In this respect there seems to be less uniformity than in any other part of their costume. Often the headpiece is wanting. Long hair is prevalent: it is sometimes braided and ornamented with silver brooches. Paints are still used for the face, both for the purposes of dress and mourning. Each Indian youth, from the time he is acknowledged as a hunter capable of supporting himself, ordinarily carries a pipe, and a skipetagun, or tobacco-pouch. This pouch is commonly the entire skin of an otter, lynx, or other small animal, dressed with the pelt on; and drawing an aperture upon the throat, this sack, besides the usual quantity of tobacco and smoking-weed (kinnekinic), commonly contains a fire-steel, flint, and bit of spunk, and sometimes a knife. But this appendage is not to be confounded with the sacred metawiiaun, or medicine-sack, which is the consecrated repository, not only of his medicines, but also of his personal manitos and relics."—*Schoolcraft's Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley.*

bled each other; and the acquiline nose, keen eyes, and beautifully-arched brows of the one contrasted as strongly with the heavy inexpressive look and thick lips of the other, as did the closely-fitting hunting-frock of the first, which a black belt, sown thick with studs of brass, secured to his erect form, with the loose shirt that crumpled around the crouching person of the other. A hard-featured borderer, with long sandy hair flowing from under a cap of wolf-skin, and dressed in a bright-green capote with an orange-colored sash, sat smoking a pipe on the other side of the fireplace; while one foot dangled from the bed on which he had placed himself, and another rested on a Spanish saddle, whose holsters were brought so near to the fire, as it lay thus carelessly thrown in a corner, that the brazen butts of a pair of heavy pistols were continually exposed to view by the flickering light. A pale, sickly-looking woman, with an infant in her arms, and two small children clinging around her lap, sat in the centre, and completed the group. Her husband and another, a hanger-on of the establishment, had stepped out to look after our horses, as we drove up to the door. The apartment, which was not more than twenty feet square, was cumbered up with four beds; and when I thought how many there were to occupy them, and observed a thin, cotton curtain flapping against a wide unglazed opening, which formed the only window of this forlorn chamber, I thought that the prospect of comfortable accommodation for the night was any thing but promising. Presently, however, the landlord entered, with an armful of burr-oak and split hickory, which crackled and sputtered at a rate that made the Indians withdraw from the ashes. The goodwoman placed her child in a rude cradle, and bestirred herself with activity and good-humor in getting supper; while the frontiers-man, knocking the ashes from his tomahawk-pipe, passed me a flask of Ohio whisky, which, after my cold ride, had all the virtue of Monongahela. Some coarse fried pork, with a bowl of stewed hominy, hot rolls, and wild honey, did not come amiss, especially when backed by a cup of capital coffee from the lower country; though the right good-will with which we all bent to this important business of eating did not prevent me from noticing the Frenchman-like particularity with which the Indians ate from but one dish at a time, though tasting every thing upon the table.

The best-looking of the two, though daubed with paint to a degree that made him look perfectly savage, was almost the only Indian I had yet found who could talk English at all; and he seemed both amused and interested while I read over to him a

slight vocabulary of words in his own language, as I had taken down the terms occasionally in my pocket-book, and was evidently gratified when I added to their number from his lips. He spoke the language, indeed, with a clearness and distinctness of enunciation such as I have only heard before from a female tongue; and the words thus pronounced had a delicacy and music in their sound entirely wanting in the usual slovenly utterance of Indians. You would have been struck, too, in the midst of our philological task, to see the grim-looking savage bend over and rock the cradle, as the shivering infant would commence crying behind us. In this way, the evening passed rapidly enough; and then the good dame, with her husband and children taking one bed, the green rider and I took each another, while the stage-driver and remaining white man shared the fourth together. The Indians brought in their guns and blankets from without, and, making a mattress of my buffalo-skin, they placed their feet to the fire, and, after a chirping conversation of a few minutes beneath their woollen toggery, sunk to slumber.

The moon was still shining brightly above, as I sallied out an hour before dawn to wash in the snow, and finish in the open air the toilet commenced in the crowded shanty. Our sleigh, a low, clumsy pine box on a pair of ox-runners, was soon after at the door; and covering up my extremities as well as I could in the wild hay which filled the bottom (for the morning was intensely cold), I wound my fur robe around my head to keep my face from freezing, and soon found myself gliding at a prodigious rate over the smooth prairie. The sun was several hours high when we struck a fine grove of timber, through which the small but rapid River Huron takes its way; and thrashing through the wintry stream, we merely paused long enough at a shanty on the opposite side to adjust some of our harness which was broken while fording the torrent, and reached a comfortable log-cabin, in which we breakfasted at noon. There was an Indian encampment within gun-shot of the house; and seeing a melancholy-looking squaw with an infant in her arms hanging about the farm-house, I left my landlady turning some venison cutlets and grilled grouse, to see how the aborigines fared in this cold weather. A pretty Indian girl of fourteen, driving a couple of half-starved ponies, indicated the camp of her friends. They proved to be a very inferior band, having but two hunters, and those inefficient-looking fellows, to a score of women and children. Sheer necessity had compelled them to encamp near the settlement; and a more squalid, miserable-looking set of creatures I never beheld. The chief of the

party, contrary to the usual Indian custom, had let his beard* grow till it stood out in small tufts from every part of his sinister-looking, smoke-dried face; and the thong of leather which sustained his scalping-knife seemed to answer the double purpose of binding the fragments of his greasy and tattered capote to his body, and of keeping the loosely-hung component parts of the body itself together. A bluff-faced, English-looking white youth of eighteen, with a shock head of reddish curly hair, and wearing a hunting-frock of some coarse material, striped like a bed-ticking, secured to his body with a red belt, from which a hatchet was suspended, was assisting him in "spancelling" a refractory pony. The young gentleman, as I afterward learned, *belonged* to the tribe —some runaway apprentice, perhaps, who thought he was playing Rolla. The rest of the mongrel concern dodged like beavers beneath the mats of their smoky wigwams, as I approached their common fire to warm myself.

Returning to the farm-house, I found a little girl playing on the floor with several strings of beads, which the squaw first mentioned had just parted with to purchase food for her starving infant. The family, however, though they suffered the child to retain the ornaments, supplied the poor woman with food and comforts to ten times their value. The Indian mother, I was told, though nearly fainting from exhaustion, asked for nothing except for her child; and seemed deeply affected when, after by signs apprizing the whites of her situation, she obtained the required sustenance.

Upon emerging from this grove and getting out once more on the prairie, I could distinguish a solitary horseman, followed by his dog, coming toward us, at least a mile off; and remarking, that as they approached us the distance between the man and his canine companion increased at a very unusual rate, I was induced to scan the appearance of the latter as he passed within rifle-shot of our sleigh after his master was out of hail. It proved to be

* Robertson, Charlevoix, and other European writers, mention that the American Indians have naturally no beards. Mr. Schoolcraft, in observing that a beard is less common to our aborigines than to the natives of Europe or Asia, ascribes its absence chiefly to the fashion of plucking it out in early life. "It is esteemed necessary to the decency of appearance among the young and middle-aged to remove the beard; and, as the razor is unknown to them, they employ the only means at command to eradicate it. Hence it is more common to see beards upon old men, who become careless and neglectful of personal appearance. Of the Indians of the Algonquin stock, the Chippewas are perhaps the most exempted from beards, the Ottawas less so, and the Pottawatomies still less. Among the two last tribes there is a custom sufficiently frequent, though not universal, of letting the beard grow only upon the under lip, or upon the chin, from which it depends in a compact lock, or a kind of bunch."—*Travels in the Mississippi Valley.*

an enormous wolf; and we actually tracked the fellow for eighteen miles, to a thick brake on the banks of a frozen stream, from which he had first leaped into the traveler's tracks, and steadily followed on in his horse's steps to the point where he passed us. The cowardly rascal, being hard pushed with hunger, though he could have no idea of attacking the traveler by himself, had probably just trudged along mile after mile in hope of raising a *posse comitatus* of his long-haired brethren along the road, or of availing himself after nightfall of some accident that might overtake the horseman, who was so unconscious of his volunteer escort. Had the man but turned his horse and run the wolf a hundred yards, he would have rid himself of a companion that circumstances might possibly have rendered inconvenient.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the banks of Rock River, whose broad and limpid current was, of course, congealed by the rigors of winter. The enterprising and intelligent settler from the city of New York, who, though repeatedly driven off by the Indians, has been for fifteen years established at "Dixon's Ferry," detained me some time at dinner in expatiating upon the healthfulness of the adjacent country, and the abundance of fish and game of all kinds which frequent the waters of the fine stream upon which he resides. The river, which is navigable for boats of fifty tons nearly a hundred miles above the Mississippi, flows through a gentle valley, with the prairie sloping to its edge upon either side, except when a group of bold rocks, forming a cave, whose entrance has a perfect Gothic arch of some twenty feet high, rear their sudden pinnacles above the farther bank. The smoothness of the adjacent ground is broken here and there by an open grove; while an occasional thicket, with one or two rankly overgrown alluvial islands in the river, must constitute a beautiful landscape in summer. This spot was Gen. Atkinson's headquarters during the Black-Hawk war, and may be considered about the centre of operations during the recent Indian difficulties. A sharp ride of twelve miles over the open prairie brought us after dark to Buffalo Grove, the scene of some of the most melancholy incidents that attended those commotions.

A party of four or five mounted travelers, bound from Galena for the lower country, were obliged to pass the grove on their route just after the difficulties with the Indians commenced. They had reached the edge of the grove, when one of the number, conceiving that it might harbor an ambush, suggested the expediency of deviating from the usual path, and taking a somewhat circuitous course. He was opposed, however, by his companions; and one of them, taunting him with an unnecessary regard to prudence,

spurred his horse, and advanced first into the fatal wood. His horse could have made but a few bounds—I have seen his grave, just within the edge of the grove—when an Indian bullet brought him to the ground; and his companions, wheeling on their track, for the present escaped farther mischief. On arriving at Dixon's Ferry, it was proposed the next day to return and bury the poor fellow, who had thus fallen a victim to his own rashness. Eight persons, among whom was Mr. Savary, the Indian agent for the hostile tribes, volunteered upon the kind office, which was performed without molestation; and the agent, with the greater part of those present, then kept on his way to the upper country; the rest, among whom was my informant, returning to their home on Rock River. A confused account is given of what followed; as four of Mr. Savary's party, including himself, were slain in another ambush; and those who escaped by the speed of their horses had but little opportunity, after the first surprise, to observe how their companions met their fate. It is agreed, however, that the unfortunate agent, turning in his saddle after the first fire, was shot in the act of appealing to the Indians as their friend and "father," —the reply being a disclaimer of his official character, and the words, "We have no longer any white father," accompanying the discharge of the piece whose bullet pierced his brain. The head of the ill-fated gentleman, carried off by the Indians, is said to have been afterward recognized and recovered from the savage band. The Indians fired the house of the settler (an old New-Yorker) at Buffalo Grove; and the half-burnt timbers and lonely doorposts contrasted strangly, as I viewed them, in passing, by the morning sun, with the neat new log-dwelling a few paces off, in which I had most comfortably spent the night before.

But these traces of savage war soon, by their frequency, become familiar.

The aspect of the country changes considerably soon after passing Rock River. The prairie is frequently broken by sudden ravines; the number of groves increases; the streams run more rapidly over their pebbly beds; and huge masses of crumbling rock rise like the ruined walls of old castles along the mimic vales through which they take their way. In these secluded dells, a number of settlers had ventured to fix themselves along the Galena route; and though many have now returned to their precarious homes, the humble dwellings and various little improvements of others remain as they left them when fleeing with their families before the dreaded savage. With the appearance of one of these cottages I was struck particularly. The roots of a large tree, whose branches brushed a wall of rock opposite to it, had caused

a sparkling brook to describe the form of a horse-shoe in winding through a small alluvial bottom, while a row of wild plum-trees across the little peninsula thus formed divided it from the rest of the valley, and just left room enough for the cabin of the settler, with a few acres for a garden around his door. A few acres more along the margin of the brook supplies another enclosure; and the fences and fixtures exhibited a degree of care and arrangement by no means common in this region. But the exiled owner had never returned to his tasteful though humble home. The open door swung loose upon a single hinge; the snow lay far within the threshold; and a solitary raven, perched upon the roof, seemed to consider the abode of desolation so much his own, that, heedless of a flock of his brothers which rose from some carrion near as we approached the place, he only moved sideways along the rafter, and gave a solitary croak as we drove by.

Approaching Galena, the country becomes still more broken and rocky, until at last a few short hills, here called "knobs," indicated our approach to Fever River: the river itself at once became visible when we had wound round the last of these, and got among the broken ravines that seam the declivity, sloping down for nearly a mile to its margin. Short sudden hills, the bluffs of the prairie beyond, partly wooded and partly faced with rock, formed the opposite shore; while the town of Galena lay scattered along their broken outline, as if some giant had pitched a handful of houses against the hill-side, and the slimy mud (for which the streets of Galena are celebrated) had caused them to stick there. We crossed on the ice, and I am now once more in a frame-house.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, UPPER MISSISSIPPI, *Feb. 5th.*

I HAD only been in Galena a few hours, when I learned that a mail-carrier was to start in the morning for Fort Crawford on the Upper Mississippi, and determined at once to accompany him; deferring an examination of the country around Galena till my return. It was about eleven o'clock of a fine, clear, cold day, when my *compagnon de voyage*, a bluff-faced, curly-pated fellow, in a green blanket coat, drove up to the door in a better sleigh than I had seen on any of the post-routes below; and wrapping myself up in a couple of buffalo-robes and sundry blankets, I found myself, after ascending the rugged bluffs of Fever River, armed at all points to encounter the biting wind which swept the open plain beyond. And here I may remark, that although the cold winds in this prairie country have a power that I had no idea of till I experienced it, yet the people dress so much more rationally than

they do at the north on the sea-board, that health and even comfort are but little invaded.

I remember, when first overtaken by the cold weather on the prairies, I was traveling with a simple furred wrapper as an overcoat and a pair of carpet socks over my boots; the last of which, from their clumsy and effeminate appearance, I long neglected to put on. But on arriving one night at a lonely shanty, I found an old Indian trader just disencumbering himself of his traveling gear, and the lesson has not been readily forgotten. His disrobing reminded me of the grave-digger in Hamlet with his sixteen jackets, (a stale joke, by the by, which is now rarely practised upon the stage,)—and a man-at-arms of the fifteenth century, with his armor of plate and triple coat of twisted mail, was not cased in better proof than was my Indian trader. Among the articles of dress that I recollect, were a blanket-coat over an ordinary surtout, a plaid cloak upon that, and a buffalo-robe trumping the whole; while three pair of woollen socks, buckskin moccasins, and long boots of buffalo-skin with the fur inside, assisted his leggins of green baize in keeping his extremities warm; and a huge hood and visor of fur set Jack Frost at defiance should he assail from above. I do not by any means mention all these defences as constituting the ordinary apparel of the country; for every one on the frontier dresses just as he pleases, and whether he has his blankets and skins made up into coats and boots, or wears them loose about his person, no one comments upon it. The utmost freedom of dress prevails; and you may see the same person three days in succession with a leather hunting-shirt, a surtout of scarlet woollen, or a coat of superfine broadcloth just from St. Louis, all worn in any company with the same air of independence; and while several colors and textures frequently combine in the same dress, the result is of course an outrageous violation of taste in individual instances, but great picturesqueness of costume upon the whole: the very figure whose apparel is most obnoxious to the laws of good taste as last enacted by fashion, being often that which, of all others, a painter would introduce into a landscape to relieve its colors, or copy for some romantic charm of its own.

The country through which we now drove, though only interspersed here and there with woodland, presented a very different appearance from the open prairie below. In the vicinity of Galena it was much broken by rocky ravines and deep gullies, which, in the spring of the year, must afford a ready passage for the water created by the melting of large bodies of snow; and far away toward the Mississippi, the inequalities of the surface showed

like a distant range of mountains, that on nearer approach resolved themselves into three or four distinct hills, which again on reaching their banks proved to be only rocky eminences, of a few hundred feet elevation—standing isolated on the vast plain, like excrescences thrown up by some eruption from its surface. Beyond these, again, the country became beautifully undulating; and when the warm light of sunset glanced along the tall yellow grass which raised its tapering spears above the snowy surface, and the purple light of evening deepened in the scattered groves that rested on its bosom, it required no exercise of fancy to conceive that these were sloping lawns, and smooth meadows, and open parks, which the gathering shades of night were stealing from the eye. But at last, just where the landscape was becoming almost too broken to keep up these associations of high cultivation, a distant light appeared glimmering at the bottom of a rocky valley; and slipping and floundering through the snow which partially smoothed the rugged descent, we entered a small hamlet of log-huts, and drove up to the door of a frame-building, which proved to be the public-house of "Mineral Point."

A portly Tennesseean, of some six feet high, received us warmly at the door, and hurried me into a room where a large fire of burr-oak, and a smoking supper of venison and hot corn-cakes, were alike welcome. Half a dozen miners in leather shirts or belted coats of Kentucky jean were lounging about the establishment; while a tall backwoodsman, in a fringed hunting-frock, was stretched on several chairs, with a pipe in one hand, and the other resting on a Pelham novel, which, with a volume of Shakespeare, an old bible, and the "Western Songster," formed a pyramid beneath his brawny arm. "Whirling Thunder," the Winnebago chief, had, as I was informed, just left the establishment, or our party would have been perfect. The old fellow, who, I presume, is superannuated, had been breathing revenge and slaughter against the Sauks and Foxes, who, he says, have killed a number of his tribe, and he avows a determination to come down upon the enemy with seven hundred warriors;* though I believe it is

* The animosity existing between these warlike tribes, it would seem, has lately manifested itself beneath the very guns of Fort Crawford. In an article which appeared in the St. Louis papers, while these pages were passing through the press, it is stated, under date of November 18th, that "The Indians in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien have again been engaged in hostile acts, which portend a serious termination. A party of Sauks and Foxs, after killing several Menomones on Grant River, attacked a lodge of Winnebagoes on an island about three miles above Prairie du Chien. It was occupied at the time by women and children only, the warriors being absent on a hunting excursion. Suddenly the Sauk-and-Fox party made their appearance before

well known that there are not at present half the number in his tribe, and they scattered far and wide on their hunting expeditions. As it was, however, I found the company into which I was thrown in more than one way agreeable. They were civil and conversable; and when a cigar was handed me by a well-dressed gentleman engaged in the mines, who had sat down to supper with us, I stretched my legs before the fire, and soon felt myself perfectly at home. The rumors of Indian wars, with the incidents in those already gone by, being thoroughly discussed, feats of strength and activity were next introduced; whereat, a burly, broad-shouldered fellow, with a head of hair like a boat's swab, jumped on his feet, and shaking the flaps of his rough kersey doublet like pair of wings, he crowed and swore that he could throw any man of his weight in the mines. "Why, Bill Armstrong," cried a little old man, who I was assured was nearly eighty years of age, shaking the ashes from his pipe the while, "I could double up two such fellows as you in my time; and I think as it is (slowly rising and collaring the puissant Bill), I'll whip one of them now for a treat;" they grappled at once, and Armstrong good-naturedly allowing the old man to put him down, a laugh was raised at his expense. But Bill was too much a cock-of-the-walk to mind it; and, striding up to the bar, he called out, "Come here, old fellow, and take your treat—your a steamboat; but who couldn't be beat by a fellow that had forty years the advantage of him!"

The next day's sun found us, when a few hours high, in a country which, though not a house was to be seen for miles, I can

the lodge, fired into it, tomahawked and scalped *ten* of the inmates. But one of the Sauk warriors lost his life, and that was by the hand of a Winnebago boy, about fifteen years of age. The youth was standing at the door of the lodge, between a younger brother and sister, when two of the warriors made their appearance and fired upon them. Recollecting instantly that an old gun remained in the lodge loaded, he procured it, and awaited the return of the foe, who had retreated for the purpose of reloading their guns. As soon as they appeared before him, he took deliberate aim at one of them, fired, and the bullet went through the heart of his enemy. He then escaped at the interior of the lodge, made his way for the river, swam it, and gave information of the massacre at Fort Crawford. A detachment of troops was immediately ordered out in pursuit of the murderers, but, as far as known, without success. The Winnebagoes, it is said, had determined on retaliation, and their warriors were already collecting. Their foe, it is also known, are ready to receive them; having been recently arming and equipping themselves for fight. Toward the Winnebagoes all parties of the Sauks and Foxes have an undying hatred. They view them as having been the cause, by their bad counsels, of all the calamities brought upon them by the late war, and as having acted a treacherous and infamous part at the termination of it. Many circumstances concur to make it more than probable that, should a conflict take place, it will be a long and bloody one."

only compare, with its intermingling of prairies and groves, rocky ravines and rapid brooks of sparkling water, to the appearance which the beautiful cultivated districts along the Hudson would present if the fences and farm-houses were taken away. Its varied aspect was far more pleasing to my eye than the immense plains of table-land below, where the sound of a waterfall is never to be heard, and a stone larger than a pebble is (unless on the banks of the Illinois) rarely met with. The soil, indeed, is not so rich, but the country is unquestionably more healthy; and though the climate is actually more severe in winter, yet the wind is so much broken by the numerous groves and the general inequalities of surface, that one suffers much less from cold. A great error is committed by Government in keeping the wild land of this region out of market; for the patches of woodland, though frequent, are not so dense as those below; and the number of smelting-furnaces of lead-ore, which are scattered over the whole country between Rock River and the Ouisconsin, tends to diminish them so rapidly, that a dozen years hence wood enough will hardly be left for the ordinary purposes of the farmer. Whatever measures are adopted, however—and I believe there is a bill in relation to these lands now pending in Congress—the pre-emption rights of the first settlers should be secured in the most liberal manner. Their sufferings from three Indian wars within ten years, and their endurance of every risk and privation, are almost incredible; and, considering that it will take them some time now to recover from the last affair of Black Hawk, Government ought to give them several years' credit; but the early sale of the lands I believe to be indispensable to the future welfare of one of the finest regions in the world. The truth is, that no smelting should be done in the interior; but the mineral should be transported to points where fuel is more abundant, and the timber now growing upon the spot left for the use of the farmers and miners, to whom it is indispensable for the prosecution of their labors. Such will hardly be the case until a property in lands is established, and individuals are no longer permitted to sweep grove after grove from the soil, till the country begins to assimilate in some places to those leaf-tracks in Illinois, which will probably remain unsettled prairie for a century to come.

I was particularly struck with the bold life which these miners have long led—the chief dangers of which, it is presumed, are now over—by observing a strong block-house erected among a cluster of small shanties, where two brothers lived, with whom we stopped to take some refreshment at noon. They were miners and farmers

together; and carrying on their business remote from any other house or settlement, they probably sent the mineral and vegetable productions of their favored soil to market at Galena in the same car. They had struck the vein of ore which they were working in badger-hunting—the habits of that animal being of great assistance to the miner in exploring for mineral. I saw at the same place a fine dog terribly gored by a wild boar—the descendant of the domestic hog, which runs wild in this region, and sometimes makes a good hunt.

Our route hither, which was by no means direct, carried us through a broken savage country, where a thousand clear streams seemed to have their birth among the rocks, singing away, though the earth was wrapped

"In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,"

as if the leaves of June quivered over their crystal currents. At one time, these crisped fountains were the only objects that gave life to a burnt forest through which we rode, where the tall, branchless, and charred trees stood motionless on the steep hill-side, or lay in wild disorder as they had tumbled from the rocky heights into a ravine below. Emerging from this desolate region, where the tracks of bears and other wild animals were to be seen on every side, we launched out on one of the loveliest prairies I ever beheld. It was about a mile wide, and not more than four or five in length, and smooth as a billiard-table, with two small islets of wood in the centre. Our horses, which had seemed almost fagged out by slipping and stumbling among the rocks and fallen trees in the timbered land, now pricked up their ears and snorted with animation as they made our light sleigh skim over the smooth plain.

It was afternoon on the third day after leaving Galena, that on descending an abrupt *steppe* of about fifty yards, we came to a small tributary of the Ouisconsin, winding through a narrow valley below. Following down the slender rill, whose banks exhibited no shrubbery save a few dwarf willows, we crossed a wooded bottom, where the long grass among the trees shot above the snow to the height of our horses' shoulders, and reached at last the Ouisconsin, where the stream might be near a-quarter of a mile wide. After trying the ice in several places with long poles, we ventured at last to cross; and, scaling a bold bluff at the opposite side, paused a moment at a trading-house, owned by a Frenchman, to let our horses blow. A band of Winnebagoes were standing at the door; and as they were all in mourning for some

recently-deceased relations,* their broad blunt features, blackened as they were, made them look like Hottentots. A ride of six miles, through a high rolling prairie interspersed with open groves of oak, brought us at last in view of the bluffs of the Upper Mississippi, rising in rocky masses to the height of four or five hundred feet above the bed of that beautiful river, whose iron-bound banks and gentle crystalline current bear but little affinity to the marshy shores and turbid tide which are distinguished by the same name, after the Missouri gives a new character to its waters. Never shall I forget the first view of "The Father of Rivers," as a reach of several miles—shut in, partly by its own bluffs, and partly by those of the Ouisconsin, with its numerous islets smiling in the light of the setting sun—stretched like some comely lake of the west before my eye. It was girdled, apparently, by inaccessible cliffs on three sides, and fringed by a broad meadow, which, in its turn, was bounded and sheltered by lofty bluffs, on the fourth. That meadow lay now beneath me, and it was Prairie du Chien.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, UPPER MISS., *Feb. 12th, 1834.*

THE shadows of its western bluffs had deepened far over the broad surface of the ice-bound Mississippi, though a flood of yellow light still bathed the gray walls of Fort Crawford, as its exten-

* The Winnebagoes, as they are the most savage-looking, are among the haughtiest of the tribesmen. They differ in many respects from the neighboring clans; and Carver says, that in his time there was a tradition in the country that the nation sprung from "some strolling bands from the Mexican countries." In "Long's Expedition" they are mentioned as being of distinct origin from the Algonquin tribes, and their language is said to present greater difficulties than any of the northern dialects. "It abounds," says that work, "in harsh and guttural sounds, and in the letter *r*, which does not appear to be common in the Algonquin languages. It is difficult to obtain correct information concerning the manners and characters of the Winnebagoes, as a strong prejudice appears to prevail against them. They are considered unfriendly to white men, and this, instead of being viewed in the light of a favorable trait of their character, as indicative of a high spirit which can resent injustice and oppression, and which will not crouch before the aggressor, has been the occasion of much ill-wind toward them."—*Long's Expedition, page 216.*

The custom of blacking the face by way of mourning, as mentioned in the text, is by no means peculiar to the Winnebagoes:—

"The Indians are particular in their demonstrations of grief for departed friends; they consist in darkening their faces with charcoal, fasting, abstaining from the use of vermilion and other ornaments in dress, etc.; they also make incisions in their arms, legs, and other parts of the body. These are not made for the purposes of mortification, or to create a pain which shall, by dividing their attention, efface the recollection of their loss; but entirely from a belief that their grief is internal, and that the only way of dispelling it is to give it a vent through which to escape."—*Ibid., page 226.*

sive barracks lay in the form of an isolated square on the level meadow beneath us; while, farther to the north, a number of dingy-wooden buildings, which looked like a fishing hamlet,* on the immediate bank of the river, were momentarily growing more indistinct in the advancing twilight as we approached their purlieus, and drove up to a cabaret about half a mile from the garrison.

It was within pistol-shot of the river; a comfortable frame-building, with a stockade-fence around it, made with pickets, some ten or fifteen feet high; a *voyageur* or two, with a few half-breed-looking residents, were loitering about the door; and a tall Menomone Indian, with a tuft of drooping feathers on his crown, was standing with folded arms apart from the rest.

A portly soldier-like German, who had formerly been a non-commissioned officer in the infantry, proved to be the landlord, and bowed me, like a master of his business, into a room heated to suffocation by a large Canadian stove, placing at the same time a strip of newly-written paper in my hands. Imagine my surprise when I discovered it to be a play-bill! "The *public*" were respectfully informed, that the sterling English comedy of

* CARVER, who visited Prairie du Chien in 1766, describes it, under the name of "The Lower Town of the Ottagaumies," as a large place, "containing three hundred families. The houses," he adds, "are well built, after the Indian manner, and pleasantly situated on a very rich soil, from which they raise every necessary of life in abundance. This town is the great mart where all the adjacent tribes, and even those who inhabit the most remote branches of the Mississippi, annually assemble about the latter end of May, bringing with them their furs to dispose of to the traders." The aspect of the village is very different at present. It consists, exclusive of two or three frame-built stores, of some five-and-twenty rude and ruinous dwelling-houses, which are almost black with age, and the population can hardly amount to two hundred souls. The situation of the hamlet and the features of the country adjacent are thus described in "Long's Second Expedition:"—"The village of Prairie du Chien is situated four or five miles above the mouth of the Wisconsan, on a beautiful prairie, which extends along the eastern bank of the river for about ten miles in length, and which is limited to the east by a range of steep hills, rising to a height of about four hundred and thirty-five feet, and running parallel with the course of the river about a mile and a-half. On the western bank are bluffs which rise to the same elevation, and are washed at their base by the river. 'Pike's Hill,' which is on the west bank, immediately opposite to the mouth of the Wisconsan, is about five hundred and fifty feet high. The hill has no particular limits in regard to its extent, being merely a part of the river's bluffs, which stretch along the margin of the river on the west, and retain pretty nearly the same elevation above the water. In general the acclivity toward the river is made up of precipices ranged one above another, some of which are one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet high. From the top there is a fine view of the two rivers which mingle their waters at the base of this majestic hill."—*Expedition to the Sources of St. Peter's River, Vol. I., page 238.*

"Who Wants a Guinea?" and Fielding's afterpiece of "Don Quixote in England," with songs, recitations, etc., would be presented this evening, by the soldiers of the First Regiment at Fort Crawford. Nothing could be more *apropos*. I had just ascertained that on account of the present deep snows, with the prospect of an early thaw, it would be almost impossible to get up to the Falls of St. Anthony, whither my ambition led me, at this season; and having now no further plans to arrange during the evening, and being wholly unprovided with letters to the officers of the garrison, I was really rejoiced at such an opportunity of entering its walls incognito.

The sleigh in which I had come carried me in a few minutes within the sally-port, and handing the ticket with which mine host had provided me to a soldier who acted as door-keeper, I entered a large barrack-room, fitted up very neatly as a theatre by the soldiers themselves; the scenery, quite cleverly done, being all painted by them, and the lights, ingeniously placed in bayonets, prettily arranged,—a contrivance suggested by their own taste. The seats, rising like the pit of a theatre, were so adjusted as to separate the audience into three divisions: the officers with their families furnished one, the soldiers another, and "gumboes," Indians, and a negro servant or two made up the third. A superb-looking squaw of the Sauk-and-Fox* tribe attracted my attention as I entered the room, and prevented me from advancing beyond the worshipful part of the assemblage last mentioned, as she sat between two pretty but plainly-dressed Menomonee† girls, in a more rich and beautiful costume than I ever saw at a fancy ball. The curtain rose while I was studying her noble features and tasteful finery, and contrasting the striking and somewhat voluptuous character of both with the simple attire and less mature charms of the two nut-brown beauties beside her. Every eye was then directed to the stage, and I remained standing

* "The united bands of the Saukies and Ottigaumies, the French nicknamed, according to their wonted custom, Des Sacs and Des Renards—the Sacks and the Foxes."—*Carver.*

† The Mè-nó-mò-nè, or wild-rice-eaters, is a broken band that served with effect against the Sauks and Foxes in the Indian difficulties of 1832. They are a finely-shaped people, of a much lighter complexion than the other northwestern tribes, and exhibit a great deal of taste in preparing, and neatness in wearing, the various articles of Indian dress—ornamented belts, gaiters, sheaths for knives, moccasins, etc. In Long's Expedition they are mentioned as "The White Indians," and are supposed not to belong to the Algonquin stock. It is said that few white men have ever been able to learn their language; and in their intercourse they use the melange of the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomie dialects, which is the common medium of communication on the frontier.—*See Long's Expedition, Charlevoix, etc.*

against the door-post till the act was concluded: and then, just as I was wishing for some one to whom to express my surprise at the degree of skill and judgment with which the soldiers played, considering they were but amateurs, an officer made his way up to me, and very politely insisted upon my taking his seat in the more favored part of the house. The ordinary interchange of commonplaces between gentlemen who are strangers to each other ensued, and then, without his knowing my name or the slightest circumstance in relation to me, an invitation to take up my quarters in the garrison followed. I declined the invitation, but we exchanged cards; and I had hardly got through breakfast in the morning, when my new acquaintance, accompanied by Colonel T., the commandant, and a young subaltern, called to repeat the invitation of the evening before; bringing a soldier with a sled to transport my baggage, and a led horse to carry myself over to the garrison. It would have been absurd to meet such cordial proffers of hospitality with further ceremony; and an hour after found me with a handsomely-furnished room of my own, a fine saddle-horse placed at my disposal, and a servant at my call, sitting down to the mess with as fine a set of young fellows as I ever met with. I have been particular in describing my initiation into this agreeable and accomplished circle, merely to give you some idea of the gentleman-like courtesy and frank hospitality which distinguish the officers of the army, wherever I have been fortunate enough to meet with them.

I have now been here nearly two weeks. The weather has been mild and beautiful, and my time, in such congenial society, passes delightfully; so much so, indeed, that when I wake each morn at *reveille*, it is with a kind of sad feeling I remember that the twenty-four hours just passed brings me nearer to the time when I must start again on my solitary tour, through a region where fortune can hardly throw me a second time among such companions.

The garrison here consists of five companies of infantry, under the command of a lieutenant-colonel. They are well quartered in very handsome barracks, built by the soldiers themselves of cut stone; the buildings being arranged in the form of a square, and enclosing an area large enough for a battalion to drill in. The parade is nicely graveled, and a colonnade, which extends round three sides of the parade, gives a cheerful aspect to the whole. The hospital stands by itself on a slight knoll about a hundred yards from the barracks, and both are pleasantly situated near the banks of the Mississippi. The place, as it now stands, would be easily tenable against hordes of Indians, should they be

mad enough to assail it. There is not a tree around it, and it is furnished with a park of artillery, which, from an open interval left at each angle of the parallelogram, could sweep the whole prairie. But these openings, which are flanked by no works whatsoever, by breaking the unity of the square, destroy even the appearance of a fortification; and the place, if not carried by an assault from a regular force, would easily fall before its formal approaches. Such an attack was indeed never contemplated when Fort Crawford—which was only intended to overawe the Indians—was erected; but even in a collection of barracks, one likes to see them so disposed as to preserve a military air. There is a small but well-chosen library belonging to the post, and several of the companies have quite good miscellaneous libraries of their own,—a fact exceedingly creditable to the private soldiers. The amusements of the place, so far as society is concerned, are of course limited. The officers' families do indeed make a small circle; and for those who like to study life in all its phases, there is the little village of Prairie du Chien about half a mile from the garrison, with its antique-looking timber-built houses, containing an amphibious population of *voyageurs* and hunters, half-French and half-Indian. Here the officers sometimes amuse themselves in getting up what is called a gumbo ball, which, from the descriptions I have had of them, must be a kind of harlequinade I should very much like to see. Sporting, however,—when the resources of the library are exhausted, or a pipe of kinnekinic ceases to charm,—is the great source of amusement at Prairie du Chien. The grouse now keep in large packs near the garrison; snipe, too, I am told, are abundant when in season, and of ducks I am assured it is easy to kill a canoe-load, when they begin to fly along the Mississippi. Elk, bear, and wolves are the game of those who are more ambitious in their sport, and choose to go farther to seek it. The meat of the first I have not yet tasted, but I made a capital dinner yesterday from a sirloin of the second, at the commandant's quarters. Bruin was served up in handsome style, and some old wine from Colonel T.'s hospitable cellar relished in this latitude.

The scenery round Prairie du Chien would please you much. The snow has now entirely left the bosom of the prairie, though it still hangs like flakes of morning mist round the rocky brows of the adjacent bluffs. The singular landscape created by these bold heights has been called monotonous; but I do not find it so. Not a day, not an hour passes, but they present some new appearance. Each shifting cloud brings out some new angle of the gigantic blocks; and, whether the rosy tints of dawn warm their

steep sullen brows, or the glare of noon settles on their round summits, and tries to pierce the deep ravines which block them out from each other, or sunset, with its mellow hues, lingers among the long grass which paints their "umbered face," where they first swell from the plain,—to me they are always lovely, grand, and peculiar. I ascended one of them, accompanied by an officer on horseback, the other day, by winding up a ravine in the rear, which brought us on a round, bold, grassy height, about one hundred feet above the prairie; to which the bluff descended by two sheer precipices of rock, of about a hundred feet each, with alternate slopes of soil, covered with long yellow grass—the whole having the appearance of some vast fortress—an enormous bastion thrown up in huge layers of earth and stone. On the very summit was one of those ancient fortifications, the mysterious mementoes of an unknown race, whose gigantic and enduring works are scattered over thousands of leagues of this continent, to puzzle the curious and set at naught the surmises of the antiquary.* I trod each winding of the turf-covered rampart, and counted what appeared to be the embrasures for artillery, as my military friend commented upon the position, and described a number of similar remains which he had examined in different parts of the Western country: while we alike dissented from the unsatisfactory conclusions of those closet theorists who would attribute the fortified appearance of this tall elevation,—the enormous mounds in the vicinity of St. Louis,—the sunken remains on the alluvial bottoms of Illinois,—the perfect forms which give its name to Circleville in Ohio, and the deep intrenchments which channel the rocky hills of eastern Kentucky, alike to the action of water: suppositions upon a par for ingenuity with those which

* These curious remains are very numerous in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien, and extend alike along the bluffs which face the Mississippi and those which run parallel to the Ouisconsin (or Wisconsan, as it is sometimes written). The former, which are the works alluded to in the text, are thus described by Major Long, in his journal of 1817:—

"The remains of ancient works, constructed probably for military purposes, were found more numerous and of greater extent on the highlands, just above the mouth of the Wisconsan, than any of which a description has been made public, or that have as yet been discovered in the western country. There the parapets and mounds were found connected in one series of works. Wherever there was an angle in the principal lines, a mound of the largest size was erected at the angle; the parapets were terminated by mounds at each extremity, and also at the gateways. No ditch was observed on either side of the parapet. In many places the lines were composed of parapets and mounds in conjunction, the mounds being arranged along the parapets at their usual distance from each other, and operating as flank defences to the lines.

"The Indians in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien can give no account of

account for the existence of the prairies by the sudden withdrawal of the same element from what was formerly the beds of a chain of vast inland lakes. The same prairies, in every instance that I have yet seen, except the single one of Prairie du Chien, being high table-land, some sixty or a hundred feet above the streams and groves which occasionally chequer them. I forget whether I have before mentioned that the Indian name for prairie (scutay) which means also *fire*, would account for their origin with any one who had had an opportunity of observing how the action of that element extends these grassy domains every season in one direction, while it leaves them to shoot up into a luxuriant growth of young forest in another.*

But turn with me to yonder view of the Mississippi, where a hundred wooded islets of every possible form repose upon the glistening ice that silvers its broad bosom. How grandly does the bold promontory of "Pike's Hill," interlocked as it seems with the gray crags of the Ouisconsin, shut in the lordly stream on the south; and there, where the blue water has broken its white fetters, and those diminutive figures are leaping from one ice-cake to another, as they sparkle in the sun along the smooth eastern shore, how beautifully the tall, brown grass bends over the pebbly margin! You may look now, though it is two miles off, into the very centre of Fort Crawford, where the gleam of arms flashing over the sanded parade tells of troops in motion, though the sound of their drums can hardly reach your ears. What a point would this be from which to view the meeting of hostile forces! The armies of Europe might manœuvre on the smooth prairie below, and not a guide could indicate a position without its being manifest to your eye long before a battalion could attain it.

these ancient works, and their only mode of explaining their existence is by supposing that the country was inhabited, at a period anterior to the most remote traditions, by a race of white men similar to those of European origin, and that they were cut off by their forefathers. 'It is said that tomahawks of brass and other metals, differing from those in use among the present Indians, have been found under the surface of the ground.'—[*Keating.*] And stories are told of gigantic skeletons being often disinterred in the neighborhood. Mr. Brisbois, who has been for a long time a resident of Prairie du Chien, informed me that he saw the skeletons of eight persons that were found in digging a cellar near his house, lying side by side. They were of a gigantic size, measuring about eight feet from head to foot. He added, that he took a leg-bone of one of them and placed it by the side of his own leg, in order to compare the length of the two; the bone of the skeleton extended six inches above his knee. None of these bones could be preserved, as they crumbled to dust soon after they were exposed to the atmosphere."—[*Major Long's MS. as quoted in his Second Expedition.*]

* See Fergus' Historical Series, No. 3. "Origin of the Prairies." By Hon. John Dean Caton, LL.D., late Chief-Justice of Illinois.